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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the scholarly literature concerned, directly or indirectly, with the implementation of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The first part considers the reasons both for the past neglect of implementation issues and for the current interest in the subject. It also introduces some conceptual issues relevant to the analysis of implementation questions, drawing heavily on the literature that focuses on policy processes in Western countries. The second part offers general observations concerning the literature on the implementation of educational policies in Africa, and characterizes this literature with respect to the policies considered, the countries studied, and other variables. The third part outlines the major conceptual frameworks that have been developed for the analysis of implementation issues. It then considers the matter of causation as this is addressed, explicitly or implicitly, in the literature on educational policy implementation in Africa. Six major sets of variables are identified, and the arguments that have been advanced with respect to the explanatory significance of each set are summarized. The paper concludes with some comments on the deficiencies of literature reviewed and with a call for research that is better informed by the often more sophisticated work of those who have studied implementation issues in other policy domains and in other parts of the world. The appendices follow the text. The first lists the journals surveyed systematically for purposes of this paper, and the second is a bibliography. (Author)

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World Bank Discussion Papers
Africa Technical Department Series

Comparative African Experiences in Implementing Educational Policies

John Craig

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The set of studies on implementation of African educational policies was edited by Mr. George Psacharopoulos. Mr. Psacharopoulos wishes to acknowledge the help of Professor G. Eshiwani, who beyond being the author of the case study on Kenya (see No. 85) has coordinated the production of the other case studies in the region.

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Africa Technical Department Series

Comparative African Experiences in Implementing Educational Policies

John Craig

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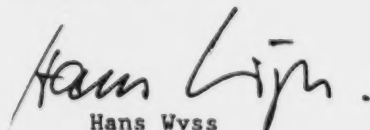
FOREWORD

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s witnessed dramatic quantitative growth in African education systems. Beyond expanding educational places, many African countries pronounced intentions to "reform" their educational systems, by adjusting the length of education cycles, altering the terms of access to educational opportunity, changing the curriculum content, or otherwise attempting to link the provision of education and training more closely to perceived requirements for national socio-economic development. Strong economic growth performances of most African economies encouraged optimistic perceptions of the ability of governments to fulfill educational aspirations which were set forth in educational policy pronouncements.

Sadly, the adverse economic conditions of the 1980s, combined with population growth rates which are among the highest in the world meant that by the early 1980s, education enrollment growth stalled and the quality of education at all levels was widely regarded as having deteriorated. In recognition of the emerging crisis in African education, the World Bank undertook a major review to diagnose the problems of erosion of quality and stagnation of enrollments. Emerging from that work was a policy study, Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization, and Expansion, which was issued in 1988. That study does not prescribe one set of education policies for all of Sub-Saharan Africa. Rather, it presents a framework within which countries may formulate strategies tailored to their own needs and circumstances. In fact, a central point which is stressed in the study is the need for each country to develop its own country-specific education strategy and policies, taking into account the country's unique circumstances, resource endowment and national cultural heritage.

The crucial role of national strategies and policies cannot be over-emphasized. In recognition of the centrality of sound policies as a basis for progress, in 1987 the Bank's Education and Training Department (the relevant unit responsible for the policy, planning and research function at that time) commissioned a set of papers by African analysts on the comparative experiences of eight Anglophone Eastern and Southern African countries, each of which had developed and issued major education policy reforms or pronouncements. The papers give special attention to deficiencies in the design and/or implementation processes that account for the often-yawning gaps between policy intentions and outcomes. The lessons afforded by the eight African case studies, along with a broader- perspective assessment of educational policy implementation, are presented in the papers by George Psacharopoulos (the overall manager of the set of studies) and John Craig. The eight country case studies are presented in companion reports.

By disseminating this set of studies on the implementation of African educational policies, it is hoped that the lessons of experience will be incorporated into the current efforts by African countries to design and implement national policies and programs to adjust, revitalize and selectively expand the education and training systems which prepare Africa's human resources, the true cornerstone of African development.


Hans Wyss
Director
Technical Department
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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the scholarly literature concerned, directly or indirectly, with the implementation of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper is in three parts. The first part considers the reasons both for the past neglect of implementation issues and for the current interest in the subject. It also introduces some conceptual issues relevant to the analysis of implementation questions, drawing heavily on the literature that focuses on policy processes in Western countries.

The second part offers general observations concerning the literature on the implementation of educational policies in Africa, and characterizes this literature with respect to the policies considered, the countries studied, and other variables.

The third part outlines the major conceptual frameworks that have been developed for the analysis of implementation issues. It then considers the matter of causation as this is addressed, explicitly or implicitly, in the literature on educational policy implementation in Africa. Six major sets of variables are identified, and the arguments that have been advanced with respect to the explanatory significance of each set are summarized.

The paper concludes with some comments on the deficiencies of literature reviewed and with a call for research that is better informed by the often more sophisticated work of those who have studied implementation issues in other policy domains and in other parts of the world.

The appendices follow the text. The first lists the journals surveyed systematically for purposes of this paper, and the second is a bibliography.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Implementation is in vogue. Students and makers of public policy, until recently essentially unconcerned with the subject, now commonly assign implementation a prominent and often dominant position in their research and planning agendas. Journals of public policy and of evaluation research feature articles on implementation; conferences and workshops devoted to the subject proliferate; and governments and international agencies have become preoccupied with such closely related matters as decentralized planning, needs assessment, and management training. As a subject of serious attention and debate, implementation has arrived.

But for all the current interest, our knowledge of the subject remains limited. This is particularly true with respect to policy implementation in the less developed countries. As yet, little is known about the degree to which public policies are actually implemented in these countries, or about the factors that facilitate or impede implementation. It is now commonly and correctly assumed that implementation is indeed problematic -- that the adoption of policies does not ensure that they go into effect -- but just how problematic, and with what consequences, remains unclear. Also unclear, by extension, is the potential for successful interventions to facilitate implementation. The problem may now be recognized, but its dimensions and the appropriate remedies remain to be established.

It is this challenge that provides the context and the motivation for the present paper. The paper aims at furthering our understanding of the relevant issues through a systematic survey of the literature on the implementation of a particular set of public policies of developing countries -- educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper is in three parts. The first part comments on some of the reasons both for the traditional neglect of implementation issues and for the current intense interest in the subject. It also addresses certain conceptual issues relevant to the analysis of implementation. The second part offers some general observations concerning the literature on educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa, and characterizes this literature in terms of several variables: the policies considered, the countries studied, and so on. The third and longest part introduces the major conceptual frameworks that have been developed for the

analysis of implementation issues and, building on them, addresses the matter of causation with particular reference to education in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. THE DISCOVERY OF IMPLEMENTATION

The discovery of implementation as a subject worthy of scholarly attention has its roots in the intense and wide-ranging reform activities of the 1960s, both in the developed West and in the developing countries. In the developed countries, the main catalyst was the flurry of reform initiatives, including educational reform initiatives, associated with the War on Poverty in the United States. In the developing countries, the primary impetus came from the numerous five-year plans for national development adopted in this "First Development Decade."

At the time, the almost unanimous view among policy-makers and planners was that the public policies, once in place, were automatically implemented in full. It was not that reform was considered as a simple or straightforward process, but the complexities and uncertainties were all associated with policy-making, not with implementation -- with identifying the problems to be solved, with research, with developing and applying appropriate planning models, with mobilizing the support needed to adopt policies, and so on. Once these necessary and often demanding chores had been completed, the implicit assumption went, it was possible to relax; full implementation would follow naturally.

Among the factors contributing to this myopia, four deserve mention. The first concerns the predilections of the civil servants and advisers responsible for preparing policy initiatives and development plans. For these experts it was (and remains) tempting to assume that the world is "rational" rather than messy, and accordingly that sound policies would meet no effective resistance.

The second factor concerns the priorities of the politicians and pressure groups involved. These actors tend to be preoccupied with getting pet concerns onto the public policy agenda and with shaping and adopting the appropriate legislation (or with frustrating and defeating countervailing legislation). What happened after policies were adopted received little attention, either because this was considered beyond their control or, in a more cynical view, because they did not care.

The third factor concerns the scholarly disciplines. In the 1960s there was no support system within the academy for the systematic study of public policy. The field of public administration focuses on the inner working of bureaucracies while the discipline of political science, the other obvious place to look, tended to lose interest in a subject when the politicians lost interest; it remained preoccupied with the study of voting patterns, of the behavior of politicians, of political theory, and of the characteristics of constitutions and representative institutions.

The final factor concerns data constraints. Simply put, the empirical evidence that might have corrected the myopia of the technocrats, the politicians, and the scholars was not readily accessible. Then, as today, the kind of evidence needed to assess implementation was inherently difficult to collect and to evaluate. In addition, the major social policy initiatives of the 1960s that could be expected to generate both measures of outputs and an interest in examining them had not yet run their course. It was perhaps for this reason, above all, that the discovery of implementation as a major issue did not come until the 1970s.

Continuing in this vein, serious interest in implementation emerged in response to accumulating evidence of wide disparities between the results of the social reforms introduced in the 1960s and the declared objectives. But to put this development into context, this was not the only possible response or, perhaps, the most popular one. It is useful in this regard to distinguish two emergent and in many respects competing schools of thought, one focussing on unintended consequences and the other on implementation. Observers who focused on unintended consequences used the disparities between intentions and results to support general criticisms of the particular policies in question and, often, of the theoretical perspectives, planning models, and research methods that lay behind these policies. Given their larger agendas, these critics had to assume that the policies in question had actually been implemented: perverse consequences could not be blamed on misguided policies if the policies had not been put into effect. Two examples, both bearing on educational reform in the Third World, should suffice. First, proponents of cost-benefit analysis as a guide to educational planning commonly cited evidence of under- or over- fulfilled enrollment projections or of the unfortunate effects of educational diversification ("the vocational school

fallacy") when criticizing the manpower-planning approach that allegedly had led to the policies in question. Second, neo-Marxist and structuralist critics used similar evidence to support their assertions that true educational reform would not be possible unless accompanied by more general transformation of the economic and social context. These two examples illustrate a more general point: it is commonly not in the interests of critics of the theories and methods that shape public policies to emphasize implementation, for to do so may be to let the unpalatable perspectives and procedures off the hook.

By the same token, proponents of these perspectives and procedures, particularly if under attack, may find it helpful to shift the onus to issues of implementation. Indeed this option is what seems to have generated and largely sustained the current interest in implementation. The argument was simple: if there were indisputably large disparities between the intentions of policies and the results, the fault did not lie with the policies -- or with the theories and methods and individuals behind these policies -- but rather with the failure of those responsible to implement the policies, or to implement them in the intended manner. By this reasoning, implementation failures have caused unjustified cynicism about reform policies and about systematic planning for national development. Again, two examples relating to education in developing countries should suffice. In an assessment of African manpower plans undertaken in the 1960s, a proponent of manpower planning argued that the over-supply and under-employment of the highly educated, subsequently observed in many African countries, could not be blamed on the plans, or on the approach, since the countries involved had permitted enrollment to increase far in excess of the needs forecast by the plans.¹ More recently, advocates of cost-benefit approaches have defended their perspective against criticism in part by arguing that governments have not implemented the policies suggested by this approach². In these and other cases, emphasizing implementation failures becomes a useful device for diverting critical attention from particular policies and from the sponsoring individuals, institutions, and theories. In this vein, a recent critique by three proponents of a radical paradigm has dismissed the current interest in

¹Jolly 1975

²deTray 1986; Psacharopoulos 1975

implementation as "the last ditch stand" of a fundamentally flawed functionalist and neo-classical approach to educational reform ³. Others, less radical but just as cynical, see the current interest in implementation as merely another of the fads that periodically sweep through the development community ⁴.

But such critiques, and the preceding remarks concerning motives, do not mean that implementation is a false issue. Whatever the ulterior motives of some of those who focus on the subject, it is now clear that implementation merits the serious attention of those concerned with innovation and reform. For this, much of the credit should go to a series of studies conducted in the United States that began to appear in the mid-1970s. Certainly the key work, indeed a work that almost singlehandedly (and by design) legitimated implementation as a serious object of analysis, is Geoffrey Pressman's and Aaron Wildavsky's Implementation [1973]. Also worthy of mention, both because of their focus on educational policies and because of the particular analytical framework developed, are the so-called Rand studies of Head Start and other educational policies identified with the War on Poverty ⁵. Studies such as these helped to establish implementation as a major topic of scholarly inquiry, and also reflected and stimulated a desire to move from descriptive studies of particular cases to the development of appropriate theories. The desire, to be sure, remains but partially realized. There does not yet exist a general theory of implementation worth taking seriously, and the prospects are not encouraging. What we do now have, however, are a variety of conceptualizations and middle-range hypotheses with claims to wide or even universal validity. The frontiers of research on implementation have now moved well beyond the purely descriptive orientation that quite naturally characterized most of the early studies.

But these are all developments to which research on the developing countries, and particularly research on education in the developing countries, has made a negligible contribution. Virtually all of the progress toward the development of appropriate frameworks and testable hypotheses has come on the

³Papagiannis et al. 1982

⁴Hurst and Rodwell 1986

⁵Berman and McLaughlin 1978

basis of research conducted on policies in Western countries, particularly in the United States. Although there recently has been much serious study of implementation problems in the developing countries, the literature remains largely descriptive, generally uninformed by the attempts of others to abstract from the Western experience, and for the most part focussed on policy domains distinct from education. The survey of the relevant literature undertaken for this report has uncovered not a single study of the implementation of educational reforms in developing countries that would satisfy the conceptual and methodological standards now common in such studies conducted in Western countries.

The lack of adequate attention given to the study of policy implementation in developing countries is all the more regrettable for a set of three reasons that distinguishes these countries from the developed West. First, the need for major changes in order to alleviate poverty and generate self-sustaining growth is transparent. Second, experience suggests that, by comparison with the West, these countries are socially penetrable: policies that are implemented do have major and enduring impacts⁶. And third, these countries are the ones that can least afford the inefficiencies implicit in the failure to implement policies. For these reasons, greater familiarity with issues relating to the implementation of educational reforms in these countries can have potentially important implications for policy and for national development. The rest of this paper seeks to further this goal, both by surveying what is known or can be inferred about the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa and by suggesting areas in which the returns to research and policy interventions are likely to be high.

⁶Hofferbert and Erguder 1985

3. LITERATURE

In setting out to review the literature on any subject, two questions immediately present themselves: What to seek? And where to look? In this particular case the answers were far from obvious at the outset, and those developed are far from self-explanatory in retrospect. Accordingly, before commenting on the literature examined, some attention to the procedures followed is in order. We shall first consider certain definitional issues and then turn to the strategy followed to compile a bibliography.

Students of public administration and public policy generally agree that implementation is but one of several stages in the life cycle of a policy. Particular taxonomies vary, but a representative view would be that any policy that completes the cycle progresses through as many as seven more-or-less distinct and logically sequential stages: generation, formulation, adoption, implementation, impact, evaluation, and, perhaps, adaptation or reformulation⁷. Thus implementation cannot be an issue unless the policy in question has been designed and adopted, and it ceases to be an issue once the policy has been put into practice. This is not to say that how a policy is developed or given legal form will have no effect on its implementation, or that policy-makers and politicians should be unconcerned about implementation issues. Nor is it to argue that the initial impact or declared goals of a policy cannot generate or sustain resistance to its implementation. But for all these forward and backward linkages, the stages in the policy process remain logically distinct. And this paper honors the distinctions: its focus is on implementation and not on any of the other stages.

It should be noted that this approach differs somewhat from that favored by several leading students of implementation in Western countries. Specifically, many argue that the impact of a policy, both immediately and in the long run, should be taken into account when assessing implementation: by their reasoning, a policy has not been fully implemented unless it has attained its underlying objectives⁸. But whatever its appeal in the abstract

⁷see, for instance, Fullan and Pomfret 1977; Majone and Wildavsky 1987; Papagiannis et al. 1982; Sabatier and Mazmanian 1983

⁸Majone and Wildavsky 1978

or for those concerned with the West, this position seems inappropriate when considering the developing countries. As suggested earlier, much of the interest in implementation in these countries is related to debates over the wisdom of particular policies. If the goals of a policy do not materialize, should we blame the policy or the failure of those responsible to implement the policy? Given the importance of this question, it is unwise to confound the issues by regarding the degree of attainment of policy objectives as a yardstick of implementation. Hence, in this paper, the soundness of a policy, by whatever criteria, and the success of its implementation are considered separate issues (while recognizing that the policy's soundness in the eyes of observers may affect its implementation). Just as there can be "good" policies that fail to be implemented, there can be "bad" policies that are fully implemented. By extension, the current concern with implementation problems in developing countries, appropriate and overdue as it may be, does not mean that it is always desirable that policies be implemented. We can all think of many cases in which the inability of a developing country to implement a particular policy has been a blessing ⁹.

Two definitional matters remain: the meaning of success and failure with respect to implementation, and the interpretation to be given the term "educational policy". Concerning the former, it is perhaps tempting to think of implementation in either-or terms: either a policy is implemented, or it is not. The temptation should be resisted. It is almost impossible, even in developed countries, to find policies of more than trivial significance that are implemented precisely as intended. Yet there are probably few formally adopted policies that have no effects in practice or that have effects totally unrelated to or inconsistent with the original intention¹⁰. Thus it is more appropriate to think of success and failure as the ends of a continuum, and to be prepared to assess policies in terms of degrees of implementation ¹¹. It is also important to recognize that a policy can be over-implemented, in the sense that its targets are over-fulfilled. With respect to education in Africa, the most obvious examples relate to the unprojected increases in expenditures on schooling that have resulted. For present purposes, over-

⁹Koloko 1980; and, more generally, Johnson and O'Connor 1979

¹⁰Majone and Wildavsky 1978

¹¹Choguill 1980

fulfillment of policy objectives, like under-fulfillment, is considered at least partial failure of implementation.

Concerning the term "educational policy," this paper adopts a broad interpretation. Any formally adopted policy with implications for education in Sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from minor innovations bearing on the internal efficiency of schools to wholesale curricular reforms and five-year plans for manpower development, has been considered eligible for consideration. This wide-ranging approach is favored in part because it seems preferable to err, if one must err, on the side of inclusiveness, and in part with an eye to expanding the size and variety of the sampled literature.

Having thus resolved the question of what to seek, we are left with the matter of where to look. Ideally, a review of the literature on educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa would consider a wide variety of materials, ranging from scholarly articles and monographs to planning documents, debates in representative assemblies, formal legislation, and in-house evaluation reports. But practical obstacles -- both the limited resources of the author and restrictions on access to evaluation studies and other materials -- have dictated that this paper be confined to the accessible scholarly literature and, to a lesser degree, to the texts of a sample of national development plans. With respect to the scholarly literature, accessibility has been defined by the holdings of two major research libraries, those of the University of Chicago and of Northwestern University. The former has unusually rich holdings in the general area of education and development and the latter possesses one of the world's few comprehensive collections in the field of African studies. Given their strong and complementary resources, it may be assumed that these two libraries between them possess the great bulk of the scholarly literature bearing on the theme of this paper, and that access to an even fuller array would not substantially alter the impressions and assessments presented below.

The procedures used to identify the potentially relevant scholarly literature were unconventional. For reasons based largely on the author's experiences with previous literature searches, it was decided that the available bibliographies and abstracting services provide unreliable guides: they tend to be incomplete in their coverage and, even within their

guidelines, inconsistent in applying their criteria for selection and classification. But what are the alternatives? The one adopted in this case was to go directly to the scholarly journals considered most likely to contain articles bearing on the subject of interest, and to look systematically through every issue of every journal from, typically, sometime in the 1960s (or the time of the journal's founding, if later) to the present. The citations in the relevant articles located were then used to compile a working bibliography of the monographic literature and to suggest additional journals for systematic examination.

Overall, 147 periodicals were surveyed systematically. Table 1 categorizes these publications according to two defining criteria: their disciplinary orientation, if any is predominant, and their regional orientation, if any. Appendix A gives a full list of these periodicals, organized alphabetically by title, and indicates the years surveyed.

Table 1

Journals Surveyed by Discipline and Regional Focus, if Any

	Africa	LDCs	General
Anthropology	-	-	6
Demography	-	1	2
Economics	5	4	4
Education	3	2	16
Geography	5	-	1
History	5	-	3
Political Science	1	-	10
Public Administration/ Policy Studies	4	5	15
Sociology	-	-	9
Social Sciences:			
Multidisciplinary	18	15	2
General; Miscellaneous	10	1	-

Source: Author's research

Perusal of these periodicals identified roughly 600 articles deemed worthy of closer inspection. But the results of the obvious next step were less encouraging. Of the articles initially identified, fewer than half made a

useful contribution to the understanding of educational policy implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa, even employing a generous definition of "useful contribution". Appendix B lists both the articles initially identified and those considered worthy, for present purposes, of more than passing attention, designating the latter with either one or (if particularly useful) two asterisks. It also lists the monographs identified through the procedures outlined above that proved to be interest. Monographs that proved on inspection to be of no interest for purposes of this paper have not been listed.

Most publications worthy of attention in the present context are directly concerned, at least in part, with the implementation of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. But also useful are several studies that shed light on the appropriate socio-political or institutional contexts without considering implementation questions directly, and several others that comment helpfully on implementation without reference to education in Africa. To assist readers interested in keeping abreast of the literature, Table 2 presents the distribution of articles according to general character and to the categories of periodicals indicated in Table 1, and Table 3 designates the journals that have published the largest numbers of articles considered relevant.

Of those publications directly concerned with the implementation of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa, a disproportionate number focus on countries that were once British colonies or mandates. The disproportion is pronounced even after taking into account differences in the populations of the countries in question, as Table 4 indicates. It is possible that the particular publications examined are unrepresentative of all those concerned with African educational policies. It is more likely, however, that the sample is a reasonable accurate reflection of an uneven distribution of relevant publications according to focus, language, and place of origin. If this impression is correct, it raises a number of challenging questions. Should we conclude that the implementation of educational policies has been less problematic in countries that have inherited Belgian or French or Portuguese rather than British administrative institutions and traditions? Are the non-Anglophone countries less-committed, on balance, to pursuing educational reforms? Are the linguistic limitations of social scientists interested in Africa a constraint?

Table 2

Relevant Articles by General Topic and Category of Journal

	Education in Africa	African Contexts	Implementation General

Discipline:			
Anthropology	1	-	1
Demography	-	-	-
Economics	20	2	1
Education	50	4	15
Geography	2	-	-
History	9	-	-
Political Science	6	3	1
Pub. Adm./Pol. Studies	2	2	10
Sociology	-	1	1
Social Sciences	49	8	5
Gen.; Miscellaneous	7	-	-
Regional Focus:			
Africa	72	1	2
LDCs	52	10	14
General	21	9	18

Source: Author's Research

Table 3

Journals with most Articles Judged Relevant

	Educ. in Africa	African Contexts	Implem. General	Total
Comp. Education	15	1	-	16
Comp. Education Review	9	-	7	16
Journal of Modern Afr. Studies	8	-	-	8
Compare	7	-	-	7
Inst. of Dev. Areas	3	4	-	7
Journal of Dev. Areas	3	2	2	7
Canadian Journal of Afr. Studies	6	-	-	6
Afrika Spectrum	5	-	-	5
East Afr. Economic Review	5	-	-	5
Geneve-Africa	5	-	-	5
Intl. Labour Review	4	-	1	5
The Yearbook of Educ.	4	-	1	4
The African Review	4	-	-	4
Amer. Pol. Science Review	2	2	-	4
Econ. Dev. and Cultural Prospects	2	-	2	4

Source: Author's research

TABLE 4

Relevant Articles by Country and Category of Country

	Articles	Articles per 10 Million Inhabitants
Anglophone Southern Africa:	15	6.3
Zambia	9	
Lesotho	2	
Zimbabwe	2	
Botswana	1	
Malawi	1	
Anglophone East Africa:	48	6.2
Kenya	17	
Tanzania	14	
Uganda	4	
Sudan	3	
Two or More Countries	10	
Anglophone West Africa	33	2.9
Nigeria	27	
Ghana	3	
Sierra Leone	2	
Ghana and Sierra Leone	1	
Francophone Africa:	10	1.4
Cameroon	3	
Chad	1	
Madagascar	1	
Mali	1	
Senegal	1	
Two or More Countries	3	
Other Former Colonies:	7	.9
Zaire	4	
Mozambique	2	
Somalia	1	
Other:	2	.5
Ethiopia	2	
Africa Generally:	19	

Source: Author's research

Are there pronounced differences across groups of countries in the research climate, particularly in the opportunities for publishing results, that might be considered critical of the day? Whatever the reasons, the lack of balance is unfortunate both on the grounds of representativity and because of the different administrative structures and practices that distinguish the former British colonies from the other African countries. Opportunities for instructive comparisons across types of post-colonial administrative systems are largely precluded.

Also unrepresentative is the attention that the surveyed literature gives to particular educational policies. Table 5 indicates the general pattern, based on the articles examined.

Table 5

Articles by Subject of Policy

	Number
Educational Policies: General	13
Educational/Manpower Planning	38
Educational Expansion	19
Primary/UPE	13
Secondary	1
Tertiary	1
Administrative Reforms	5
Decentralization	2
Educational Finance	4
Teachers: Quality, Status, Supply	13
Teacher Training	3
Curricular Reforms	15
Voc. Educ.; Work-Experience Programs	3
Equity Issues	8
Language Policies	3
Coeducation	2
Selectivity by SES	2
Education and Rural Development	23
ESR	7
Non-Formal Education	11
Adult Education	3
Literacy Campaigns	2
Harambee Schools	4

Source: Author's research

Precisely how representative this pattern is cannot be determined, since there does not exist, and perhaps could not exist, a comprehensive catalogue of the policies eligible for consideration. But there are several important subjects of policy-making that receive surprisingly little attention. Overall there seems, not at all surprisingly, to be a general bias toward highly publicized and ambitious reforms -- Nigeria's quests for universal primary education (UPE), Tanzania's Education for Self-Reliance (ESR), various manifestations of Kenya's Harambee movement, and so on -- at the expense of relatively prosaic but fundamental policies relating to the financing and administration of schools and to school quality. Thus there was only one article that gave serious attention to issues of cost recovery in public education,¹² there was little on issues of curricular diversification or on coeducation and other matters relating to access, and there was nothing on policies concerning private education or concerning the production and distribution of textbooks. Presumably this allocation of emphasis does not accurately reflect the preoccupations of African policy-makers concerned with education.

The preceding remarks have stressed the limitations of the literature surveyed with respect to coverage. For present purposes, however, these limitations may not be very serious. Even if the literature is distorted in its coverage, the conclusions reached for further research on policies and countries until now has been largely overlooked. And in any case, the literature is of considerable interest for what it reveals about the subjects and societies that are considered. This offered by way of justification, let us now turn to the findings that emerge. We shall first consider the degree to which educational policies are in fact implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa, and then assess and attempt to synthesize and extend the explanations advanced.

¹²Rogers 1972

3. THE FINDINGS

Methodological and Conceptual Issues

A recent study of policy implementation based on observations in Bangladesh argues that most case studies of policy processes in developing countries focus on successes and tend to minimize failures.¹³ It is an impression contradicted by the literature on the implementation of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Admittedly it can be difficult, as noted earlier, to know where to draw the line between "success" and "failure." And the problem is compounded in this case because many of the studies judged to be relevant for current purposes never address the issue directly; they may comment perceptively on specific obstacles to implementation, but they fail to report on the degree to which these obstacles have been overcome. With these qualifications, however, and with a liberal indulgence in reading between the lines, the literature suggests that the majority of the educational policies examined are not successfully implemented according to any useful interpretation of that concept. Table 6 indicates the pattern, both overall and with respect to specific types of policies. To construct this table some decisions concerning categorization had to be rather arbitrary, but in the aggregate the distributions accurately reflect the overall impression conveyed by the literature reviewed.

Before turning to the reasons advanced for the observed difficulties in implementing policies, and for the few cases of relative success, it is important to raise again the possibility of a selection bias. Could it be argued, contradicting the conclusion reached on the basis of Bangladeshi evidence, that most case studies of policy processes in developing countries, or at least in Sub-Saharan Africa, actually focus on failures and minimize successes? Although no attempt will be made to resolve this question here, two sets of considerations deserve mention. The first concerns the methods that characterize the great majority of the studies examined. These works tend to be case studies either of particular policies or policy processes in a particular setting. Given the present state of our knowledge of the subject,

¹³Choguill 1980

Table 6

Policies by Subject and Degree of Implementation

	<u>Degree of Implementation</u>				
	None	Little	Mostly	Fully	Unclear
Educ. Policies: General	4	5	-	-	4
Educ./Manpower Planning	8	17	2	1	10
Educational Expansion	6	7	2	2	2
Administrative Reforms	2	2	-	-	1
Educational Finance	-	4	-	-	-
Teachers: Quality, etc.	9	2	-	-	2
Curricular Reforms	9	3	-	-	3
Equity Issues	3	3	-	-	2
Educ. and Rural Devel.	13	9	1	-	-
Non-Formal Education	2	4	1	-	4
Harambee Schools	-	1	1	2	-
Total	56	57	7	5	28

Source: Author's research

there is much to be said for this research strategy. But the approach brings with it certain potential biases relating to the representativity of the cases selected for scrutiny. It has been noted that case studies, in contrast to comparative studies based on ostensibly random or complete samples of populations, focus disproportionately on conflicts and disputes and tend to overstate the importance of political factors.¹⁴ This suggests that the approach favored in studies of policy implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa may convey an overall impression that implementation is more problematic than is in fact the case.

¹⁴Jones 1985

The second set of considerations bearing on the issue of selectivity bias is in the tradition of Sherlock Holmes's dog that didn't bark in the night. Studies of African educational policies that actually consider implementation -- studies that qualify for analysis in this report -- may comment on implementation not because it always deserves comment, but rather because in the cases considered it proved difficult or impossible. What we may have is a sample in which the barking dogs, the cases in which implementation proved more difficult than usual, are over-represented. (In this regard it is useful to bear in mind that in many reported cases of problems with implementing new policies, the difficulties have arisen largely because earlier policies have been quite successfully implemented.)

The issue of selectivity bias is more pertinent to the determination of what phenomena to consider than to the explanations offered. But when it comes to explanation, there are also problems with the literature under review. Although often impressive on their own terms, most of the studies are not primarily concerned with policy implementation in Africa. As for the rest, none displays an impressive level of conceptualization. The studies that comment on difficulties with implementation frequently do so without offering an explanation. And those that address the issue of causation often satisfy themselves by focussing on one or two variables -- the prevalence of expressive politics, corruption, resource constraints, the fatalism of the peasantry, or whatever. In any given case, the explanation may be correct, but the rather ad hoc approach to analysis does not inspire confidence. Nor does the approach of the few studies that at least implicitly offer multi-causal explanations; they commonly provide nothing but a check-list of independent variables with no attempt to assess, even intuitively, the strengths of their independent and joint effects, and no attempt to learn from comparisons either within societies across policies or across societies for particular policies. In sum, no study of educational policy implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa can meet the standards set by the best such studies conducted in Western countries.¹⁵

¹⁵see, for instance, Berman and McLaughlin 1978; Porter 1980; and, for a review of earlier studies, Fullan and Pomfret 1977

Given the data constraints and the research climate, it is perhaps unreasonable to fault studies of policy processes in Africa for falling short by this yardstick. But it is less easy to absolve these studies for their of familiarity with relevant literatures. To judge from their contents and their citations, few of the studies have been informed by works on policies in African countries other than the one considered. And none reveals any familiarity with the burgeoning literature on policy implementation more generally. In this important respect, the literature on the implementation of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa has developed in what amounts to an intellectual vacuum.

This is not the place to redress the balance, but a beginning may be possible. Drawing on the hypotheses and conceptualizations identified with the sub-field of policy studies often referred to as implementation analysis, we can attempt to give greater order and meaning to the often rich descriptive detail and the ad hoc explanations that characterize the literature specific to Africa. It is to this task that most of the rest of this paper is devoted.

By way of introduction, it is relevant that implementation analysis is located in the relatively new field of policy studies rather than in the obvious alternative, the long-established field of public administration or its off-shoot, development administration. A key difference is that while public administration and development administration emphasize the administrator or the administrative apparatus, for policy studies the central unit of analysis is the policy. This orientation makes it easier both to observe the effects on policy processes of influences exogenous to the administrative system and to empathize with, and hence to explain, the motives of actors who are not bureaucrats. Put differently, policy studies seek to overcome the sharp distinction between politics and administration that marks the field of public administration.¹⁶ The implications for our understanding of policy implementation will become obvious as we proceed.

Turning to the more specific perspectives associated with implementation analysis, the sub-field is dominated by two broad and competing models. The first to appear, and probably still the most influential, is referred to

¹⁶Hjern 1982

variously as the planning-and-control model,¹⁷ the research, development and diffusion (RDD) model [Havelock and Huberman 1977], the rational model,¹⁸ or top-down model.¹⁹ Whatever the label, the model can be thought of as a modification of the Weberian notions of bureaucratic rationality long identified with public administration in order to take fuller account of possible barriers to policy implementation. In its pure form this model judges the success of implementation by the degree to which a policy is actually put into practice or, in an extended variant, by the degree to which the effects of a policy match the planned or intended effects. It assumes that the policy embodies clear and consistent objectives, that the administration is neutral, benign and well-informed, and that the implementation is an entirely separate enterprise that occurs after a policy is formulated. Resistance from individuals or organized groups is commonly attributed to unwarranted selfishness or to irrationality. In sum, if a policy and a target population come into conflict, it is the latter that is expected to give way. The policy remains inviolable.

The competing model also appears under various headings: the mutual adaptation model,²⁰ the process model,²¹ the interaction model,²² the political model,²³ the "implementation game" model,²⁴ the participative or self-help model,²⁵ and the bottom-up model.²⁶ In this case it is inappropriate to describe a pure form or ideal type, since central to the model is an emphasis on the messiness, uncertainties, and unintended consequences that characterize the implementation process.²⁷ But in the interests of symmetry, it can be stated that scholars in this camp do not automatically assume that the administration in question is disinterested or adequately informed. They tend to see individual and group resistance to policies as presumptively rational rather than irrational, and the focus on

¹⁷Majone and Wildavsky 1978

¹⁸Jones 1982

¹⁹Hambleton 1983

²⁰Berman and McLaughlin 1978

²¹Fullan and Pomfret 1977

²²Majone and Wildavsky 1978

²³Jones 1982

²⁴Bardach 1977

²⁵Havelock and Huberman 1977

²⁶Hambleton 1983

²⁷Porter 1980

the interaction of competing interests -- the "implementation game" of conflict, compromise, and negotiation -- transforms policies in the course of their implementation. Adherents of this model also favor muting the distinction between policy formulation and implementation, arguing that conflict over implementation often is a continuation of other means of earlier conflict over the substance of a policy.

For the sake of completeness, it should be added that there is a third general perspective on these issues, although it is not one seriously represented within the sub-field of implementation analysis. This radical or political economy approach sees a preoccupation with implementation as misguided if not intentionally deceptive, in that it largely assumes away the systemic, structural relationships that shape and constrain societal development. The more optimistic proponents of this perspective see change as possible, but not through the implementation of specific policies directed at social engineering. What is needed is a direct assault on the structural and institutional obstacles to change. With specific reference to education, prior economic and political changes are necessary conditions for any serious effort at reform.²⁸

Obviously these frameworks, particularly in the oversimplified versions presented here, are incompatible. But for our purposes the incompatibility is an advantage, not a liability. Considered collectively the three models put us in a better position to evaluate and to develop the implications of the largely a theoretical studies that have been produced on educational policy implementation in Sub-Saharan African. They also make it easier to comprehend the disparate and often conflicting perspectives of the individuals responsible for or affected by these policies. It is to these tasks that we now turn.

The Major Variables

The discussion that follows is organized under six headings: the policy message, political factors, resource constraints, the bureaucrats and the administrators, the teachers, and the client populations. For purposes of

²⁸Papagiannis et al. 1982; Simmons 1980

considering the implementation of educational policies in the context of development, there is a defensible logic to this selection of categories and to this sequence. But it should be emphasized that the boundaries among the categories are not always clearly defined. It should be emphasized, too, that the ordering is in no sense intended to suggest the relative importance of the various sets of factors. Presumably the explanatory power of different variables would depend on the particular policy and on the context. As for the studies of African education reviewed here, none of them address the matter in more than an impressionistic way, and their impressions run the gamut: there are serious studies that give pride of place to each of the six sets of factors listed above.

The Policy Message

All serious students of policy processes agree that the formulation and implementation of policies can and should be distinguished analytically. There is also unanimity, however, that the results of the formulation stage put constraints on implementation and can decisively affect the probability of success. This is perhaps particularly true if those responsible for formulating policies are largely unconcerned with or uninformed about issues bearing on implementation -- if they make in practice a sharp distinction that can be useful for analytical purposes. Accordingly, it is appropriate to begin our consideration of the factors affecting implementation by focusing on what has been termed the policy message.²⁹ We shall look in turn at each of the three major components of a policy message, the substance of a policy, the means specified for putting a policy into effect, and the way in which the substance and the means are communicated.

With respect to the substance of a policy, the fundamental issue is one of realism: considering the changes proposed, could the policy actually be implemented under any foreseeable circumstances? The logic is succinctly expressed in a recent criticism of a study of Nigeria's attempt in the late 1970s to implement universal primary education (UPE): "it is hard to take seriously the author's professed emphasis on the problems of implementation

²⁹Hambleton 1983

with reference to a scheme whose basic problem... was the unrealistic definition of goals."³⁰

Among those who maintain that implementation failures can be traced back to unrealistic policies, there are three general and in some respects incompatible positions. The first argues that the problems defined and ostensibly addressed by particular policies are in fact intractable, or at least cannot be resolved in the absence of massive and unanticipated social and attitudinal changes. Studies in this category tend to focus on policies directed at altering the pace of educational expansion, at promoting greater equity in access to or progression through schooling, or at transforming curricular orientations. Examples would include many criticisms of the so-called vocational school fallacy³¹ as well as those studies that insist that educational reforms cannot succeed unless preceded or accompanied by what amounts to a social revolution. A representative example of the latter group is a recent study of the policies identified with Tanzania's Education for Self-Reliance: "The core argument is the following: their success was predicated upon the creation of a socialist society in Tanzania which, in fact, has not materialized; in the absence of such a society, reforms designed to achieve equality, socialist values, and attitudes are bound to fail; in fact, they were doomed from the start."³²

The second position concerning unrealistic policies assumes that the problems addressed are tractable, and without revolutionary changes in the environment, but faults the particular strategy adopted. Within this category there are two identifiable sets of studies. The first focuses on unrealistic assumptions or projections concerning monetary resources or likely drains on these resources. With respect to Africa, several studies argue that policies were much too ambitious overall, given the funds likely to be available³³, while others criticize policies for failing to take adequately into account

³⁰Urwick 1983

³¹Bacchus 1981; Foster 1965; Lillis and Hogan 1983; Marchand 1974; Marvin 1975; Sinclair 1977

³²Ergas 1982; also see Lulat 1982; Mbilinyi 1976; Moisset 1980; and Nestvogel 1983

³³Adeniyi 1980; Demele 1985; Moris 1968; Odia 1971; Rado 1967; Williams 1977

either recurrent costs³⁴ or the implications of population growth, of grade repetition, and of changing rates of attrition and progression.³⁵ The second set of studies emphasizes what might be labelled unrecognized jointness, that is, the dependence of particular initiatives on other policies that have not been introduced or perhaps even contemplated. Thus some studies note that policies of educational expansion have been adopted without appropriate provisions for the physical facilities, textbooks, or other material resources that would be needed.³⁶ Other studies focus on the supply and quality of teachers, the general point being that educational reforms have often been compromised because there was no prospect that the teachers required to carry it out would be available.³⁷ Yet another group of studies argues that particular educational policies have been unrealistic because they were not accompanied by interventions to change the incentives embedded in examination systems,³⁸ in prestige hierarchies of schools,³⁹ in investment priorities or employment projections,⁴⁰ or in the salary differences associated with occupations and career lines.⁴¹

Many of these studies implicitly touch on a more general issue, namely the particular strategies selected by policy-makers in order to attain their declared objectives. In any given case there can be a variety of instrumental options. Thus a recent article based on observations in developed countries has identified five distinct categories of strategies that may be available:⁴²

- a) regulative norms: prohibitions backed by sanctions, compulsory behavior, etc.;
- b) financial transfers and incentives: subventions, promotions, salary bonuses, etc. ;
- c) public provision: supplying services or producing goods;

³⁴Bray and Cooper 1979; and more generally, Olsen 1984

³⁵Adetoto 1966; Jolly 1975

³⁶Fapohunda 1980

³⁷Adesina 1974; Bray 1981; Goldstone 1979; Sjostrom and Sjostrom 1983

³⁸Saunders and Vulliamy 1983; Urch 1969

³⁹Lillis 1985a

⁴⁰Bray and Cooper 1979; Menck 1978; Wallace 1980

⁴¹Bacchus 1981; Court 1973; Marvin 1975; Oyene 1980; Simmons 1980

⁴²Mayntz 1983; also see Porter 1980

- d) procedural regulation: norms establishing procedures for individuals and firms;
- e) persuasion: campaigns to inform and to exhort.

Given these broad categories, and the many specific options within each, good policy design can be seen as an efficient instrument for the particular ends sought -- say, one that stresses incentives rather than control, or one that is relatively simple or inexpensive to administer. Although none of the reviewed studies of African educational policies conceptualizes the issue at this level of abstraction, several of those stressing unrecognized jointness come close: they argue, at least implicitly, that considering the announced objectives, policies as formulated have not been appropriate or "realistic."

The third position stressing lack of realism at the formulation stage concerns policies that, while perhaps implementable, are not conducive to the larger objectives presumably sought. Studies of these "educational policy mishaps," as they have been termed,⁴³ fall into two distinct categories. Those in the first group focus on efficiency narrowly construed; they argue that in view of the particular objectives sought, the changes introduced by a policy are inappropriate. (It is important to make a distinction between the appropriateness of the strategies chosen to bring about changes, the subject of the taxonomy presented above, and the appropriateness of the actual changes. Thus the question of how best to introduce an in-service training program is of a different order than the question of the efficiency of in-service training as a means of improving school quality.) The second group of studies of "mishaps" shifts the attention to side effects, arguing that particular policies, however efficient when viewed narrowly, have undesirable larger consequences that should have been taken into account. Illustrative of the first group are studies that have criticized African policy makers for putting too much emphasis on the quantitative expansion of education as opposed to qualitative improvement,⁴⁴ on physical facilities as opposed to teaching,⁴⁵ on curricular reform as opposed to textbook provision ⁴⁶, on

⁴³Psacharopoulos 1985

⁴⁴Adwere-Boamah 1972; Sheffield 1979

⁴⁵Wallace 1979

⁴⁶Heyneman 1984

secondary and higher education as opposed to basic education,⁴⁷ on community service as opposed to research and formal instruction⁴⁸, on schooling as opposed to on-the-job training⁴⁹ or adult education⁵⁰, and on education as opposed to the generation of jobs.⁵¹ Examples of the second group, the one that emphasizes unanticipated side effects, include the studies that put much of the blame on misguided educational policies for what are considered excessively high levels of urbanization, youth unemployment, rural poverty, ethnic rivalry, and other economic and social problems.⁵²

As these illustrations suggest, it may be quite possible to implement "bad" or "incorrect" policies. The social costs of "success" may be substantial, however, and hence a failure to implement should be welcomed: "bad" implementation can be a corrective for "bad" policies.⁵³ But does this mean that politicians or bureaucrats or others who intervene to obstruct implementation in such cases should be seen as serving the collective good? If so, where do we draw the line? In practice it can be exceedingly difficult to determine whether an attempt to block implementation is consistent with the larger objectives that motivated the policy or with the society's interest. And even if this determination could be made with confidence, there would be, once again, side effects to consider; obstructing "bad" policies may undermine the legitimacy of the policy-maker or the policy-making process, and thereby make it easier for those who are less public-spirited to obstruct "good" policies. These considerations remind us of the advantages of avoiding "bad" policies in the first place. Our justified interest in implementation should not deter us from the quest for planning models and policies that are realistic and "good."

If the substantive changes mandated by a policy have implications for the probability of implementation, so do the policy's provisions, if any, concerning procedural issues. For any given policy there may be numerous

⁴⁷Psacharoupoulos 1984

⁴⁸Court 1980

⁴⁹Briggs 1977

⁵⁰Csapo 1981

⁵¹Bray and Cooper 1979; Erny 1974

⁵²Dore 1976; Gardinier 1974; W.T.S. Gould 1974; Oxenham 1984; and, more generally, Dexter 1981; and Stone 1985

⁵³Majone and Wildavsky 1977

possible approaches to implementation. And since the goals of major policies are commonly multiple, vague, and at the limit, conflicting,⁵⁴ the best approach may be far from self-evident. For this reason, and in view of the resistance that any innovative policy is likely to confront, it is important that the policy-makers, those most familiar with the policy's goals, select and, if necessary, institute an appropriate implementation strategy. But to judge from the literature, this is a responsibility that educational planners policy makers in Sub-Saharan Africa have frequently failed to meet or even to recognize. If the appropriate institutional infrastructure did not exist, it was not created.⁵⁵ If it did exist, either specific duties were not assigned or else they were distributed across inevitably competing ministries and agencies without adequate provisions for coordination⁵⁶ or for continued links between the planners and those directly charged with implementation.⁵⁷ On more specific matters, the planning document or statute or decree in question often did not address such mundane but fundamental subjects as scheduling, monitoring, and evaluation.⁵⁸ In many cases these lapses on the part of planners and policy-makers -- these deficiencies in the policy message -- appear to have been at the root of the implementation problems that were to follow.

Although the substance of a policy is usually more important, the way in which a policy is communicated, the final component of the policy message, can also have important effects on the prospects for implementation. By common consent, implementation is most likely if a policy is straightforward and if its goals and mechanisms are expressed precisely and explicitly. Complexity works against clarity and openness, and incoherence or vagueness can leave administrators without needed guidance and provide openings for those bent on obstruction.⁵⁹ These general truths hold regardless of the latitude given those directly responsible for implementation. Indeed, the precise and

⁵⁴Majone and Wildavsky 1978

⁵⁵Bowden 1986; Dean 1971; Heseltine 1967; Jolly and Colclough 1972; Menck 1978; Rado 1967; Sharma 1967

⁵⁶Ayoade 1983; Elvin 1972; Greenfield 1986; Idang 1975; Obichere 1976

⁵⁷Mehmet 1971; Simmance 1972; and, more generally, Choguill 1980; and Fullan and Pomfret 1977

⁵⁸Edwards 1968; and, more generally, Edmunds 1984; and Thomas B. Smith 1985

⁵⁹Fullan and Pomfret 1977; Grindle 1981; Johnson and O'Connor 1979; Porter 1980

operational definition of objectives -- the provision of a fixed reference point -- is particularly important if bureaucrats and teachers are given wide scope.⁶⁰

These propositions find confirmation in the literature on educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Several studies, both of specific educational reforms and of national development plans with educational components, have attributed subsequent problems with implementation in large measure to the woolliness or ambivalence of the documents in question.⁶¹ Once again, the emphasis in accounting for failed policies is placed on decisions made or not made at the formulation stage, not on failures of responsibility or obstacles encountered during implementation.

Given the emphasis that the literature reviewed places on deficiencies in the policies adopted -- in the policy message -- it is appropriate to give some attention to the explanations offered. They can best be discussed under two broad headings: analytical and procedural limitations, and ulterior motives.

To the extent policy-makers and their advisers are willing to attribute failed policies to deficiencies in their own work rather than to obstacles beyond their control, they tend to emphasize the impact of data constraints. The fundamental problem, from this perspective, is that the data on which to base plans and policies are either not abundant enough or not reliable enough.⁶² In a sense they are correct, but several observers suggest that policy-makers could have done more than they did to enrich the data available. Specifically, they should have freed themselves from their narrow preoccupation with quantitative data of the kind needed for econometric model-building, and taken steps to familiarize themselves both with the relevant social and cultural context and with the scholarly literature on comparable

⁶⁰Mayntz 1983

⁶¹Adams 1983; Adeniyi 1980; Court 1976; A. Olufemi Lewis 1977; Rado 1967; Saunders and Vulliamy 1983; Smyth 1970; Uwakah 1981

⁶²Adensina 1974; Akangbou 1980; Greenfield 1968; Hirschmann 1978; Jolly and Rado 1964; Kapaji 1977; Koloko 1980; Mehmet 1971; Menck 1978; Moisset 1980

societies, particularly that not written by economists.⁶³ Educational policies, like all social policies, are commonly directed at changing well-established patterns of behavior and belief, that is, at some kind of resocialization.⁶⁴ Yet in Sub-Saharan Africa they have often been designed, according to this line of criticism, in almost complete ignorance of the behavioral predispositions and likely reactions of the target populations and, it might be added, of the teachers and others expected to bear much of the responsibility for implementation.⁶⁵ This perhaps has been a special problem with policies imported or shaped by expatriate advisers,⁶⁶ but high-ranking indigenous officials are not above criticism on this score. Indeed, the latter can be even more disposed to make hasty and unjustified decisions about policy content, sustained as they often are by poorly grounded stereotypes about teachers and peasants and by disinterest in input from these presumptively selfish or irrational groups.⁶⁷

These critics, it should be noted, are not necessarily arguing for decentralized planning or the decentralized implementation of policies. For all the current enthusiasm about the potential benefits of decentralization,⁶⁸ there may be legitimate reasons to question its wisdom in the context of still largely traditional societies.⁶⁹ But there is no necessary connection between participation and decentralization, notwithstanding some assertions to the contrary,⁷⁰ and by this view the potential gains from a more participatory approach to planning and policy-making would be substantial.

⁶³Buguo 1983-84; Goldstone 1979; Lillis and Hogan 1983; Simmons 1980; Stock 1985

⁶⁴Fullan and Pomfret 1977; Mayntz 1983; Migdal 1977

⁶⁵Adwere-Boamah 1972; Hayward 1973; Hurst 1981b; Johnston 1985; Kanduza 1981; King 1983; Koloko 1980; Moris 19678; Mosha 1983; Nwanko 1973; Oyeneye 1980; Samoff 1979; Winn 1971

⁶⁶Lillis 1985b; Urwick 1983; and more generally, Bienefeld 1983; Choguill 1980; Heseltine 1967; and Heyneman and Loxley 1983

⁶⁷Hurst 1981; Samoff 1979; and, more generally, Turan 1984

⁶⁸with specific reference to educational policies in Africa, see Foster 1980; and Kuper 1977

⁶⁹Adamolekum 1986; Ayoade 1983; Brett 1986; Elvin 1972; Luke 1986; Mutahaba 1974; Qamar 1979; Wilks 1985

⁷⁰Blunt 1984

The second criticism focuses on how policy-makers respond to their data constraints, whatever the source of these constraints. In essence the argument is that they often compound the problem by various acts of omission and commission. To begin, because of inadequate or inappropriate training, or because they are overburdened, they sometimes do a shoddy job of analyzing the available data.⁷¹ In addition, they may compensate for the limitations of their evidence with assumptions that are little more than guesses or reflections of ideological preferences.⁷² Commonly they base their policies on theories or models adopted hastily and for the wrong reasons -- frameworks employed less because they are appropriate to the problems addressed than because they have low data requirements (as with manpower planning), or justify idealism and optimism, or facilitate avoiding tough questions, or are currently in favor in developed countries or with foreign advisers and funding agencies.⁷³ Frequently they fail to coordinate their policies with those in other sectors or, alternatively, accept what amounts to second-class citizenship; instead of insisting on genuinely integrated planning, they let the often unrealistic targets set for other sectors (concerning employment growth, for instance, or rural development) establish the parameters for their own efforts.⁷⁴ In many cases, too they neglect the pressing need for sensitivity testing of their assumptions and for feasibility and pilot studies.⁷⁵

As if these unfortunate procedures and oversights were not enough, the designers of educational policies typically leave themselves and those charged with implementation little room for maneuver. Priorities are not set, there is no serious planning for contingencies, and policies are often presented in abstruse or idealistic language and with an air of certainty and authority likely to discourage the expression of misgivings and the posing of tough

⁷¹Bray and Cooper 1979; Buguo 1983-84; Hurst and Rodwell 1986; Idang 1975; Levin 1981; Obanya 1980; Shaw 1980; Williams 1977

⁷²Adetoro 1966; Court 1973; Jolly 1975; Koloko 1980; Thomas B. Smith 1985

⁷³Ahiakpor 1985; Allison and Green 1983; Briggs 1977; Bienefeld 1983; Clignet 1977; Lillis 1985b; Papagiannis et al. 1982; Psacharopoulos 1984; Shen 1977; Simmance 1972; Thomas B. Smith 1985; Swetz 1975; Tibenderana 1985; Urwick 1983

⁷⁴Daniel 1983; Koloko 1980; Leff 1985; Lema 1979; Menck 1978; Rado 1967; Richter 1984; Thomson 1972

⁷⁵Adeniyi 1980; Blunt 1984; Bowden 1986; Dror 1983; Edmunds 1984; Edwards 1968; Idang 1975; Jolly and Colclough 1972; Saunders and Vulliamy 1983

questions.⁷⁶ Why? According to one interpretation, these problems have their origins in the ivory tower outlook that tends to characterize planners and policy-makers in developing countries: in these experts' confidence in their own rationality and in their particular theories, in their preference for office work (ideally with a computer) over "getting their hands dirty" in the field, in their sharp insensitivity to issues relating to the latter.⁷⁷ According to another view, the problems result not from self-confidence but from precisely the reverse, from a deep fear of error detection reinforced by the very likelihood of miscalculation and by administrative cultures in which admitting to a mistake, even if just to correct it, can jeopardize one's career or, in the case of an international agency, continued access and influence with a particular regime.⁷⁸ But whatever the explanation, the resulting policies often start at a severe disadvantage, and on two accounts: they are difficult to implement as formulated, and they are not easily recast.

Considering the seeming irrationality that often characterizes the "rational" approach to policy formulation, it is tempting to look for ulterior motives. And such motives may not be hard to find. Thus a common "hidden agenda" appears to be the procurement of foreign aid; policies are often designed in large part to impress donor agencies, with all that this may imply in terms of unsound goals and inappropriate models.⁷⁹ In other cases policy-making takes on a life of its own; plans and policies become dilettantish pursuits of technical elegance, of art-for-art's sake, rather than coherent and realistic guides for action.⁸⁰ In still other cases the very commitment of bilateral and multilateral agencies to dispensing aid or foreign advisers' careerist concerns with enhancing their reputations in the West⁸¹ can result in distortions. And, above all, there are the domestic political concerns of the regimes identified with particular plans and policies, a theme addressed below. In short, the real objectives of educational policies are often more

⁷⁶Akangbou 1980; Court 1976; Daniel 1938; Dean 1971; Goldstone 1979; Moris 1968; Mosha 1983; Rondinelli 1982; Williams 1977

⁷⁷Elvin 1972; Heseltine 1967; Mayntz 1983; Samoff 1979; Wildavsky 1986; Winn 1971

⁷⁸Allison and Green 1983; Blunt 1984; Caiden 1976; Gould 1980; Rondinelli 1982; Saunders and Vulliamy 1983; Thomas B. Smith 1985

⁷⁹Caiden 1976; Jolly 1975; Rondinelli 1982; Winn 1971

⁸⁰Moris 1968; Jones 1985; Rado 1967

⁸¹Gould 1980; Jolly and Colclough 1972; Lillis 1985b

complex-- or less complex -- than the stated objectives. This point should be kept in mind when assessing whether policies actually attain their goals and the degree to which possible obstacles to implementation are real rather than merely apparent.

The extended discussion of issues of policy design is not meant to suggest that all implementation problems can be attributed to mistakes made at the formulation stage. It is intended, rather, to serve as a corrective to a bias in the opposite direction that may have emerged since the "discovery" of implementation, and also to serve as a context for the discussion that follows of issues specific to the implementation stage. As for the importance of policy design relative to policy implementation in accounting for the failure of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa, this important subject will be addressed at the conclusion of this section.

Political Factors

Before considering the politics of educational reform, it is necessary to set the stage with some general comments on the nature of the state and of political leadership in post-colonial Africa. The emphasis is on two closely related themes, the weakness of the state and the preoccupation with legitimacy.

"Government implies power," a distinguished political scientist observed in 1971, but "the most unequivocal and uncontestable statement one can make about most of the new nations today is how little power those at the center actually possess."⁸² At least with respect to Sub-Saharan Africa, this observation is probably as accurate today as it was fifteen years ago. While scholars may argue over the reasons -- over the relative importance of the colonial legacy, of indigenous cultures and social patterns, of economic dependence, or of other factors -- there is agreement that most African regimes rank low on perhaps the most important yardstick, the level of governmental effectiveness. For confirmation, one need only consider the dismaying record of most African

⁸²LaPalombara 1971, p. 53

regimes in passing such basic tests of effectiveness as maintaining themselves in power and curbing wholesale evasions of laws and regulations.⁸³

The fragility and ineffectiveness of these regimes means that their leaders are understandably preoccupied with legitimacy -- with governing in its absence and, if possible, with establishing and consolidating it. The balance varies across states, with the range extending from states such as Uganda and Zaire in which legitimacy seems a utopian ideal to relatively strong states such as the Ivory Coast and perhaps Kenya in which some considerable degree of legitimacy has been attained. But common to the leaders of virtually all Sub-Saharan states is a paranoid fear of destabilization and a resulting commitment to integration and control. The state may be weak, but it is hardly because the leaders are unconcerned about enhancing their power and authority.⁸⁴

The characteristic response -- the major exceptions are the few socialist states -- is some form of personal or patrimonial rule that combines the appearance of strong central authority with the reality of deference to vested interests and, on occasion, public opinion. Commonly regimes are incarnations of the spoils system, shored up by coalitions of tribes or other special interests that are held together by log-rolling and pork barrel politics and by endemic nepotism and corruption.⁸⁵ In other cases regimes are headed by altruistic idealists who seek, mostly in vain, to rule on the basis of ideologies and of calls to self-sacrifice rather than appeals to parochial selfish interests.⁸⁶ But whatever the particular style, there is a preference for big government and, typically, an "anti-politics" or anti-participatory ethos. Their non-existent or precarious legitimacy and the often prevalent spoils system convince most leaders that they cannot run the risks of delegating formal power or of tolerating opposition parties, a free and investigative press, regular and open elections, or an incorruptible civil service. But by the same token, these realities also mean that they cannot safely use the strong sanctions formally at their command. When confronted

⁸³Blunt 1984; Killick 1980; Migdal 1977

⁸⁴Adamolekun; Bernard 1985; Sandbrook 1986

⁸⁵Austin 1980; Dean 1971; Dresang 1974; Gould 1980; Idang 1975; Riggs 1964; Sandbrook 1986; Sharma 1967; Taylor 1981

⁸⁶Wildavsky 1986

with strong resistance, particularly if it comes from groups whose continued support for the regime is deemed essential, these superficially strong leaders tend to back down. Rarely can they afford to make the tough decisions or to tie themselves to unpopular policies that will only yield returns in the long run; immediate and short-run political concerns necessarily dominate.⁸⁷

These political patterns have unfortunate implications for both the design and the implementation of educational policies. Concerning the former, it is appropriate first to consider the impact on the collection and analysis of educational and related data. Even if well-intentioned, weak states can have great difficulty collecting the data needed to design sound policies, particularly the data from rural and disaffected areas.⁸⁸ And this constraint aside, fragile regimes tend to be no more hospitable to free and critical research than they are to a free and critical press. If tolerated at all, research and evaluation are commonly expected to show what the government wants shown, and no more.⁸⁹ It is hardly surprising, accordingly, that manpower surveys and plans for educational development have tended to highlight past achievements while obscuring unpleasant realities: despite the obvious need for objectivity, these documents have commonly been distorted for purposes of domestic (and foreign) consumption.⁹⁰ As for evaluations, they tend to be ignored or at least not given the care and prominence they deserve, largely, it may be assumed, out of fear of error detection. In this regard, a recent study of policy processes in the Third World generally has noted that when authoritarian regimes tolerate evaluation, they show a decided preference for cost benefit or "planning-control" approaches that make it possible to overlook or to mute such embarrassing realities as political oppression, inadequate commitment, and the reactions of the target populations.⁹¹ The relevance of this general argument to the particular case of educational research and evaluation in Sub-Saharan African countries is worth examining.

⁸⁷Blunt 1984; Hunter 1967; Luke 1986; Migdal 1977; Mutahaba 1974; Rogers 1972; Rondinelli 1979; Thomas B. Smith 1985; Smyth 1970; Wildavsky 1986; Zolberg 1968

⁸⁸Migdal 1977; Wildavsky 1986

⁸⁹Adesina 1974; Levin 1981; Levy 1986

⁹⁰Jolly 1975; Jolly and Colclough 1972

⁹¹Thomas B. Smith 1985

Turning to the impact of political factors on other aspects of educational policy-making, we again confront the issues of ulterior motives. If systematic planning and its procedural requirements are supported by national leaders, it is often for the wrong reasons. Obsessed with strengthening their grip on power, regimes rarely can afford the serious concern about development in the long run that educational planning presupposes.⁹² But in two important respects a seeming commitment to planning can serve short-term political objectives. First, it can be a prerequisite for attracting foreign aid needed either to give the regime the appearance of legitimacy or, in the more pathological cases, to fuel the spoils system.⁹³ And second, it can be a useful prop for the regime's "anti-politics" and anti-participatory ethos: comprehensive national plans can be used to justify calls for order and patience and for the curbing of dynamic political action that order and patience require.⁹⁴ None of this means that adopted plans or policies can be ignored with impunity, but there are implications for the level of a regime's commitment, a theme considered below.

When systematic planning is not supported, or when it is formally supported but actually ignored, political considerations can also dominate and distort policy-making. Good examples are those cases in which national leaders have announced educational reforms on their own initiative and without consulting the responsible ministries or agencies. In this category belong some of the most ambitious (and most thoroughly studied) educational reforms of post-colonial Africa, including ESR in Tanzania, announced in 1967 by President Julius Nyerere, and UPE in Nigeria, announced in 1974 by General Yakubu Gowon, the leader of the military junta of the day. Typically the goal is to reap short-run political advantages either from the actual reform or, perhaps more commonly, from the very announcement of the reform.⁹⁵ As for the kinds of policies adopted in this way, the common denominator is that they seem likely to enhance the regime's control or legitimacy. In practice, they tend to fall into two overlapping categories: policies that are responsive to strongly expressed public opinion, and policies that mobilize public resources that can

⁹²Idang 1975; Sharma 1967

⁹³Bernard 1985; Caiden 1976; Gould 1980; Hirschmann 1978; Keller 1977

⁹⁴Rondinelli 1982

⁹⁵Gardinier 1974; Nkinyangi 1982; Nwagwu 1978; Saunders and Vulliamy 1983; Stock 1985; Urwick 1983

be distributed selectively. Examples of the former would be the support Kenyan politicians give the Harambee movement despite its incompatibility with official educational plans, and the support that several regimes have provided for educational expansion that exceeds targeted levels.⁹⁶ An example of the latter would be the expansion of secondary education in northern Nigeria launched in 1979 by the newly installed civilian regime. In this instance, as with Gowon's announcement of UPE a few years before, "short-term calculations of political advantage dominated choices of policy."⁹⁷ The particular appeal in this case, as in others, was the opportunity the policy provided for the regime to use divisible resources to build political support. Urwick⁹⁸ has explained the logic as follows:

Political leaders, through management of the educational system, are able to distribute a variety of benefits, both material and symbolic, to selected clients and to vocal groups of potential supporters. These benefits -- appointments and contracts, community prestige, the hope of personal advancement for staff employed and pupils certified -- are exchanged for short-term gains in political influence. Not infrequently, the attractions of such exchange to rulers cause outright distortions of educational policy, in which professional advice and issues are willfully ignored.⁹⁹

Attitudes and actions such as these are largely responsible for the deficiencies of policy design discussed above and for the associated problems with implementation. But most regimes seem relatively unconcerned. In some cases, it has been argued, announced reforms are nothing but exercises in political posturing or obfuscation; political leaders have no real desire to see the reforms put into effect, and in the case of radical reforms may actually have cause to fear the consequences should the reforms succeed.¹⁰⁰ As for the political consequences of failure to follow through on commitments, evidently these are often not a major concern.

Clearly no regime can permit the educational system to collapse, and political rhetoric or public opinion can transform particular objectives, such

⁹⁶Godfrey and Mutiso 1974; Keller 1977; Smyth 1970; and, more generally, Craig 1981

⁹⁷Urwick 1983, p. 324

⁹⁸1983

⁹⁹p. 323

¹⁰⁰Bray 1982; Lulat 1982; Nkinyangi 1982

as UPE, into sacred cows that must be honored.¹⁰¹ But generally the political price for implementation failures appears to be small. The basic reason, it seems, is that the balance between the instrumental and the expressive that characterizes most political actions anywhere is tilted in the African case far toward the expressive end. The symbol is often more important than the substance, and declarations of good intentions can compensate for poor performance, particularly if the bureaucrats and the teachers are available as plausible scapegoats.¹⁰² Carried to extremes, the result can be a vicious circle. The affected groups, learning from experience, do not really expect policies to be put into effect, so there are few consequences for political leaders if targets are not met and problems remain problems. Since there are few consequences, and some obvious short-run benefits to the regime, those responsible are encouraged to continue their indulgence in expressive and irresponsible policy-making. The only real victim maybe systematic planning, which can acquire a tarnished reputation without having had a real chance.¹⁰³

These observations touch on an issue that has received considerable attention in research on policy implementation, namely the commitment to a policy that politicians manifest subsequent to the policy's adoption. Observers of policy processes have repeatedly emphasized the need for sincere, strong, and continuing support from political leaders if innovative policies are to succeed. Demonstrations of such support can contribute both by helping to break down the resistance that may come from the affected populations and by convincing the civil servants and others charged with implementation that their superiors want results. With respect to target populations, the most appropriate strategy is often to mount a propaganda campaign designed to publicize the policy and the rationale behind it and, perhaps, to create a mystique about the policy that can generate a bandwagon effect. As to the implementation agents, rhetorical devices may also be used to frequently accomplish little unless accompanied by incentives for task-oriented performance.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Heyneman 1983; Todaro 1975

¹⁰² Stone 1985; Urwick 1983

¹⁰³ Thomas B. Smith 1985

¹⁰⁴ Bowen 1982; Brett 1986; Dean 1971; Edmunds 1974; Grindle 1981; Hunter 1967; Idang 1975; Mayntz 1983; Olsen 1984; Sinclair 1977; Spencer 1977

These general remarks clearly apply to the case of educational policy testing in Sub-Saharan Africa. The literature documents numerous cases of ambitious reforms whose relative success can largely be traced to the strong support of political leaders. Thus Nyerere's inspirational rhetoric was probably decisive in generating widespread acceptance for ESR, a radical policy that was in no sense a response to popular demand.¹⁰⁵ In Nigeria, state-sponsored propaganda campaigns did much to mobilize resources and popular enthusiasm for UPE even where the initial resistance was strong.¹⁰⁶ And in Sierra Leone, the open and forceful support of the country's president gave a major impetus to the institutionalization of an ambitious attempt to re-orient education to rural development.¹⁰⁷ In addition, several reforms have failed in large measure due to the absence of strong continuing support in high places. This appears to have been the case, for instance, with the "animation rurale" program launched in Senegal in 1959¹⁰⁸, with Kenya's efforts in the 1970s to provide more education for nomadic tribes¹⁰⁹, and with the "Education for Development" program adopted by Zambia in 1976.¹¹⁰

As for general patterns, the literature suggests what might be expected: governments show less commitment to policies that call for dramatic changes in well-established practices and preferences -- the policies most likely to generate conflict -- and to an often overlapping category, redistributive policies.¹¹¹ This impression is consistent with the more general literature on planning and development, which highlights the lukewarm commitment of most regimes to policies designed to increase equity or to promote rural development.¹¹² These literatures, both the general and that on education in Africa, also suggest that political leaders well understand the need to demonstrate their strong support subsequent to policy adoption if radical reforms are to succeed.¹¹³ By extension, the absence of manifest commitment

¹⁰⁵Saunders and Vulliamy 1983

¹⁰⁶Bary 1981; Stock 1985

¹⁰⁷Adams and Chen 1982

¹⁰⁸Simmons 1979

¹⁰⁹Nkinyangi 1982

¹¹⁰Lulat, 1982; but compare Daka 1983

¹¹¹Hurst 1983; Khayar 1979; Lulat 1982; Lungu 1985; Nkinyangi 1982; Simmons 1979; Stock 1985

¹¹²Grindle 1981; Killick 1980; Riddell 1985; Thomas B. Smith 1985

¹¹³see, for instance, Samoff 1979; and Stock 1985

in such cases perhaps should be considered evidence not that adoption is equated with implementation, but rather that the policies in question are merely exercises in political posturing.

Resource Constraints

Political leaders and civil servants often blame failures to implement educational policies on resource constraints.¹¹⁴ But it is risky to take such attributions at face value. While shortages of monetary and other material resources often are the proximate causes of implementation failures, it is important for analytical purposes to distinguish between those constraints that could have been foreseen and those that are unpredictable. In the former category should be placed the numerous cases in which resource difficulties arise for reasons relating to mistakes at the design stage; because important costs have been ignored or seriously underestimated, because of unjustified optimism about domestic or foreign funding or because of inappropriate budgeting procedures.¹¹⁵ Also in this category belong those cases in which financial difficulties arise because governments do not adhere to targets set for enrollments or for per-pupil expenditures.¹¹⁶ To avoid the fallacy of over-explanation, we should focus on resource constraints only when resources that have been promised or could realistically be projected have failed to materialize.

Viewed this way, resource constraints do not appear to have had a major effect on the implementation of educational policies in Africa. There are cases, to be sure, in which foreign donor agencies have been slow to deliver funds and thus delayed the implementation of particular projects or reforms.¹¹⁷ And frequently African governments, responding to a shift in the political climate or in the economic situation, have not followed through on funding commitments.¹¹⁸ On balance, however, education appears to have fared rather well in the competition for resources. To use but one indicator, in

¹¹⁴see, for instance, Nyerere 1985

¹¹⁵Adesina 1974; Bray and Cooper 1979; Bugnicourt 1971; Dean 1971; Ergas 1982; Moris 1968; Mosha 1983; Odia 1971; Olsen 1984

¹¹⁶Dauphin 1975; Gould 1980; Kapaji and Mukanga 1977; Simmons 1979; Stock 1985

¹¹⁷Adams and Chen 1982; Dean 1971; Odia 1971; Idang 1975

¹¹⁸Ayoade 1983; Demele 1985; Enahwo 1985; Hardiman and Midgley 1982; Nyerere 1985; Riddell 1985

several countries education has been the only sector in which actual budget allocations have exceeded the levels projected by five-year plans.¹¹⁹ It should be noted, too, that shortfalls in public resources have not necessarily resulted in implementation failures. Reflecting the broad popular commitment to education found in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, private resources and ingenuity have often been mobilized to fill the gap.¹²⁰ And to reverse the tables, it is far from obvious that more abundant public resources would be an unmixed blessing. Certainly the Nigerian experience indicates that relative affluence can result in policies that are unrealistically ambitious on non-budgetary grounds and, because more is at stake, can intensify the politicization that already characterizes educational policy-making.¹²¹ All of this suggests that we should not look primarily to resource constraints when attempting to account for implementation problems.

Bureaucrats and the Administrators

In the 1960s some Western scholars feared that the bureaucracies of the developing countries were becoming too effective and too strong. There was concern that their "modernization" was more advanced than their political systems and that as a result the bureaucracies might take control of policy-making as well as of execution.¹²² And as recently as 1974 a British student of the developing countries could comment on "the illusion of bureaucratic or technocratic omnipotence which tends to overtake advocates of one policy or another -- an illusion rampant in the entire field of development studies."¹²³ But since then opinion in the West has moved toward the opposite extreme. If one still encounters references within developing countries to omniscient and omnipotent bureaucracies¹²⁴, outside observers are now more inclined to stress the impotence of public administrators. Western scholars concerned with policy effectiveness commonly express their greatest frustration with the inertia and incompetence of bureaucrats.¹²⁵ And this

¹¹⁹Simmons 1979

¹²⁰Adams and Chen 1982; Bray 1981; Godfrey and Mutiso 1974

¹²¹McDowell 1980; Urwick 1983; and, more generally, Hurst 1983; and Migdal 1977

¹²²Sifflin 1976

¹²³Lehman 1974, p. 18

¹²⁴see Wilks 1985

¹²⁵Hofferbert and Erguder 1985; Stone 1985

disillusionment with and distrust of bureaucracies as instruments of development is now widely shared within the community of donor agencies. Thus the World Bank devoted much of its World Development Report for 1983 to an unsparing critique of public administration in the developing countries, and a recent commentary on Bank research on education argues that "the greatest weakness of the LDC educational systems is their management system."¹²⁶

But is this shift in outlook justified? And does the current orthodoxy among Western scholars and donor agencies fit the particular case of education in Sub-Saharan Africa? While no attempt will be made here to answer these questions, the literature reviewed does permit us to explore several relevant issues. We shall move from the general to the specific, beginning with some rather stylized observations about the development and characteristics of public administration in Sub-Saharan Africa and then consider the evidence concerning the implementation of educational policies.

The deficiencies of public administration in post-colonial Africa have their roots in a fundamental tension between the ambitious ends commonly pursued and the conservative and often rigid procedures employed.¹²⁷ That the declared goals are ambitious requires no elaboration. But what accounts for the inappropriate procedures? To the extent the answer does not lie in the very nature of bureaucracies, we should look in two general directions: to the legacy of administrative practices in the colonial period, and to the impact of the fragile post-colonial state and its preoccupation with control legitimacy.

The colonial regimes of Africa were oriented to the provision of "good" but limited government. Through "rational" administrative procedures superimposed on still relatively stable traditional societies, they sought to maintain law and order, to provide a few basic services, and to raise the revenues needed to support these activities. Except at the very end of the colonial period, they were not structured or disposed to respond to popular pressures and did little to promote development (least of all, some would argue, educational development). In short, the African colonies embodied what has been called

¹²⁶Heyneman and White 1986, p. 129

¹²⁷see Dror 1963

administrative state, the state in which public officials are clearly dominant, sharply distinguished from the rest of the population in social position and general outlook, and preoccupied with control rather than with service or fostering change.¹²⁸

Seen in these terms, the post-colonial states of Africa can be said to have inherited the apparatus of the administrative state but rejected its ends. Although there was now at least a nominal commitment to the promotion of rapid and fundamental changes, public administration did not adapt. Initially the continued presence of expatriate officials, of officials accustomed to pursuing more limited goals, was doubtless a constraint. But replacing the expatriates, a major achievement of the 1960s and 1970s, did not correct the situation. One reason, certainly, has been the oft-criticized inertia of bureaucracies. Particular channels of communication and patterns of responsibility and deference having been established, it can be exceedingly difficult to start anew. A related reason concerns the perquisites that go with high positions in an administrative state. As Africans dislodged the expatriates from administrative positions, they acquired not only the responsibilities that went with these positions but also the rewards -- the high social status, the relative economic well-being and security, the opportunities to travel abroad, to live in towns, and to view the rest of the society, and particularly the rural sector, in terms of stereotypes. Finally, and most fundamentally, there was the weakness of the state and the resulting obsession of political leaders with control, stability, and legitimacy. However sincere their rhetorical commitment to development, these leaders found the inherited administrative state ideally suited to their immediate political needs, both their need for an instrument of integration and control and, often, their need for desirable positions to fuel the spoils system. The result has been a somewhat awkward symbiosis. Although the political leaders and the administrators have certainly had their differences -- as reflected in much mutual scapegoating and in the bureaucratic purges that so often accompany transfers of political power -- they are united in their allegiance

¹²⁸see, in particular, Luke 1986

to the basic structure: to the highly centralized, control-oriented state, with all decisions made at the top and no significant input from below.¹²⁹

But what have been the effects on public administration in practice? To begin, because of their fragility and their often justified paranoia, African political regimes cannot afford the luxury of a truly independent civil service. This basic fact, in combination with inadequate managerial training and indigenous cultural traditions, has effectively prevented the institutionalization of bureaucratic norms. African countries may have preserved the formal apparatus of the administrative state, but they have jettisoned the earlier concern with "good" government. The insidious spoils system has contributed, for it has meant that meritocratic criteria for appointment and promotion are often honored in the breach. Also contributing, it has been argued, are certain dispositions rooted in many African cultures; a high tolerance for tardiness and sloppy work, and norms of interpersonal relations that inhibit constructive criticism.¹³⁰

Even if bureaucracies exhibited the desired levels of autonomy and professionalism, they would still be vulnerable to the instability and expressive politics that characterize most Sub-Saharan African states. Thus civil servants often are saddled with the task of implementing hastily conceived policies that they consider misguided or unworkable. And the frequency with which political leaders change their priorities, and with which countries change their political leaders, creates a climate of uncertainty hardly conducive to the careful planning and the continuity that effective administration requires. The result tends to be considerable distrust and fear of political leaders, and the development within civil services of an insular and defensive outlook -- of siege mentality.¹³¹

This outlook together with the deep-rooted control orientation often results in behavior that is superficially correct but in fact unproductive or

¹²⁹Adeniyi 1980; Blunt 1984; Dean 1971; Harris 1968; Hofferbert and Erguder 1985; Hunter 1967; Idang 1975; Kanduza 1981; Luke 1986; Montgomery 1979; Sharma 1967; Wilks 1985

¹³⁰Blunt 1984; Brett 1986; Gould 1980; Grindle 1981; Kapaji and Mukanga 1977; Khayar 1979; Luke 1986; Rahim 1973; Riggs 1964; Rondinelli 1979; Sandbrook 1986; Thomas B. Smith 1985; Taylor 1981

¹³¹Hofferbert and Erguder 1985; Rimmington 1966; Shen 1977

even counterproductive. Thus in the African context the hierarchical structure commonly considered a hallmark of bureaucratic rationality may actually work against effective administration, and in two ways. First, it is an obstacle to the inter-ministerial collaboration and the formation of inter-sectoral teams to balanced and sustained development.¹³² And second, it inhibits the free flow of information essential for productive administrations. Differences in official rank tend to be associated with differences in social status, and this together with the preoccupation with control makes open communication across ranks difficult; feedback from those lower in the hierarchy commonly is interpreted as criticism, and hence is neither encouraged nor readily volunteered.¹³³ Largely for these reasons the morale of field agents is generally low and regional and local administration is weak even by the low standards of national administration. Officials in the field believe, usually with cause, that they occupy dead-end positions in which they are expected to do much with too few resources and with no incentives to motivate them. They typically respond by coping as best they can, which may entail deceptive behavior, and by resisting accountability. The result is a bureaucracy oriented less to the completion of assigned tasks than to the avoidance of error (and of error detection) and to the protective covering provided by adherence to routines.¹³⁴

The dispositions that make high officials unresponsive to input from field agents make almost all officials resist input from client populations. In this case, reinforcement comes from the stereotypes with which bureaucrats tend to view the larger society. It has been argued that an unexamined preference for regulative control on the part of officials reflects a low regard for the rationality and social responsibility of the average citizen.¹³⁵ Although cause and effect may be arguable, the association certainly fits the African case. This is particularly true with respect to the way officials view rural society. Influenced by occupational socialization and by perceptions common to town-dwellers, bureaucrats tend to see villages and peasants in terms of negative stereotypes and to dismiss any input from

¹³²Choguill 1980; Hunter 1967; Montgomery 1979; Obichere 1976

¹³³Wildavsky 1986

¹³⁴Dean 1971; Grindle 1981; Jones 1982; Montgomery 1979; Rondinelli 1979; Sheffield 1972; Siffin 1976; Thomas B. Smith 1985; Stone 1985; Wildavsky 1986

¹³⁵Mayntz 1983

the rural sector as short-sighted or misinformed. Because of this outlook, and because of the inappropriate actions that result, peasants often respond in kind, countering the "irrational peasant" image with an "intruder government" image. The result, simplifying only slightly, is what amounts to a two-tiered or two-class society consisting of relatively well-to-do public officials and poor peasants, with their relations, such as they are, marked by mutual incomprehension and distrust.¹³⁶

The literature on the management and reform of education in Sub-Saharan Africa amply documents the prevalence of these general patterns and chronic problems. By way of illustration, we shall look in turn at the impact of politics on educational administration, at issues concerning the internal efficiency of the administrative apparatus, and at the administrators' relations with those most directly responsible for putting educational policies into effect, the teachers.

Political acts have undermined effective administration in two general ways, through the policies adopted and through inconsistencies in the support given policies subsequent to adoption. Concerning the former, many of the educational policies that political leaders announce on their own initiative - examples include ESR in Tanzania, UPE in Nigeria, and the promulgation of free basic schooling in Kenya -- are at once extremely ambitious, poorly prepared, and inadequately explained. They also are frequently accompanied by calls for quick action, with the results to be judged by the attainment of quantitative targets. The gradual working out of rough spots and surmounting of obstacles often needed for successful implementation are not options, and there are few incentives to worry about those aspects of education, such as the quality of instruction, that do not lend themselves to easy measurement. The results often include exasperated administrators (and teachers) and, at best, incomplete or superficial implementation, often accompanied by negative side effects¹³⁷. Responsibility for deciding what policies to adopt should belong to the politicians, but it is a responsibility that has frequently been abused.

¹³⁶Choguill 1980; Hofferbert and Erguder 1985; Montgomery 1979; Rondinelli 1979; Samoff 1979; Turan 1984

¹³⁷Bray 1981b; Farine 1969; Newbry and Martin 1972; Rimmington 1966; Sinclair 1977

Also frequently abused, at least from the perspective of administrators, is the politicians' responsibility to provide consistent signals and steady support. Regime changes are an obvious source of difficulties, since they usually bring major shifts in policy direction and can also result in purges of the civil service.¹³⁸ But even when there is relative stability politically, there can be discontinuities both in the educational policies pursued and in the support given these policies. Most disruptive, perhaps, are the cases in which ministers of education make concessions to vocal interests that undercut their field agents. To be effective, educational administrators must know that their superiors back them and will fight for them.¹³⁹ But in the African states, such support cannot be assumed. Revealing in this regard is the case of Tanzania, one of the few states in which unpopular educational policies have appeared to enjoy the full and continuing support of the political leadership. In reality the ministry has often been unwilling to use the available sanctions (such as terminations of funding) to enforce compliance by local school districts, and the reasons have been political:

Within the Ministry of Education there seems to be a division of opinion between the bureaucrats and the politicians as to how best to enforce national policy. The bureaucrats generally insisted that the regulations be followed to the letter irrespective of problems, whereas the politicians (who had the final say) had to take into account political considerations.¹⁴⁰

The implementation of education policies can also be interrupted by unforeseen revenue shortfalls. Economic realities often force governments to trim ministerial budgets, and the consequences for efforts to reform education can be serious; because so much of the budget of an education ministry is earmarked for salaries and other recurrent expenditures that cannot easily be reduced, new initiatives tend to be disproportionately affected.

Finally, in African countries that hold elections or stage plebiscites -- there were more in the 1960s than there are now -- campaign activities and

¹³⁸Goldstone 1979; Harris 1969; Rahim 1973

¹³⁹see Elvin 1972

¹⁴⁰Mutahaba 1974, p. 518

their consequences can work against policy implementation. Candidates for public office in African countries have often found it profitable to campaign on educational issues, mobilizing and exploiting popular desires and resentments concerning particular policies. Thus in numerous cases candidates have promised to bring more schools to their districts.¹⁴¹ In Kenya, politicians have allied themselves to local pre-emptive efforts to get public funding for Harambee schools.¹⁴² In Nigeria, candidates have sought votes by promising not to enforce the compulsion embodied in UPE.¹⁴³ Even when these politicians cannot follow through on their promises, they foster expectations and resentments that complicate the task of the administrator.

Other managerial problems can less easily be attributed to outside interference. For instance, the literature repeatedly comments on general mismanagement within African ministries of education and, more specifically, on the inexperience and poor training of administrators and school inspectors and on the inadequate delivery systems that have been instituted.¹⁴⁴ Officials have been criticized for their lack of interest in seeing projects through to completion and their inability to work in harmony with those in other agencies.¹⁴⁵ Conflicts among ministries and agencies over educational matters may be a particular problem in the former French colonies due to the practice, inherited from France, of establishing a new bureau to address each newly defined problem.¹⁴⁶ In some countries tribalism and corruption are endemic within ministries of education, and it is not clear that tighter control from the center represents a solution. Thus in Zaire, centralizing salary administration within the ministry led to a dramatic increase in overt corruption and in one of its major by-products, the non-payment of rural teachers.¹⁴⁷ For numerous reasons, corruption among them, ministries are often incapable of delivering books and other supplies to the right places or

¹⁴¹Adesina 1974; Nwagwu 1978; Urwick 1983

¹⁴²Godfrey and Mutiso 1974

¹⁴³Stock 1985

¹⁴⁴Anusionwu 1981; Ayoade 1983; Bam 1972; Khayar 1979; Marawanyika 1986; Mosha 1983; Rimmington 1966

¹⁴⁵John E. Anderson 1974; Ayoade 1983; Dean 1971; Moris 1968; Mosha 1983

¹⁴⁶see Obichere 1976

¹⁴⁷Gould 1980; also see Dauphin 1975; Kapaji and Mukanga 1977; and Ndongko 1980

of paying teachers on schedule.¹⁴⁸ Finally, regional and local offices are chronically understaffed and overworked, with the result that little may be accomplished other than essential paperwork, if that. Tied to their desks or limited by inadequate funds and facilities for travel, district officers frequently do not know what is really transpiring in the schools and hence may be in no position to help headmasters and teachers understand new policies or adjust to the changes they mandate.¹⁴⁹

This brings us to the third set of problems, those relating to the interaction of administrators and teachers. From the administrators perspective, these problems, to the extent they are recognized as such, result primarily from the low quality and the inattention to duty of the teachers. But from other perspectives the administrators do not fare so well, or the teachers so poorly,. Thus according to one view, the status anxiety of civil servants causes them to ignore or to obstruct precisely those improvements in salary and other rewards that would enhance the motivation of teachers and attract brighter and more committed people into the profession.¹⁵⁰ A related view notes that ministries frequently have misgivings about raising teacher quality for budgetary reasons; they cannot afford to have many teachers occupying high positions on the salary scale.¹⁵¹ And a third view, consistent with the other two but quite different in its emphasis, stresses the negative stereotype of the teacher prevalent among administrators. The argument has been concisely presented by Paul Hurst:

Many educational administrators are not merely inclined to blame the lack of success of innovative project on the indolence and conservatism of the teachers, but they start out with such assumptions and implement projects accordingly. Reforms are introduced by bureaucratic fiat, consultation with teachers is minimal, and so is training on the innovative role. Such monitoring as takes place (usually none) consists of inspections, carried out in an inquisitorial manner.... In short the dominant image of the teacher today is approximately that of the peasant farmer of 15-20 years ago -- irrational, ignorant, conservative and suspicious of anything unfamiliar.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸Kapaji and Mukanga 1977; Mbilinyi 1976; Mosha 1983; Nwagwu 1981

¹⁴⁹Keller 1977; Sinclair 1977; Taylor 1981

¹⁵⁰Kanduza 1981; Nwagwu 1981

¹⁵¹Bam 1971

¹⁵²Hurst 1981b. pp. 187-88

Whatever the reasons, educational administrators in Sub-Saharan Africa typically bemoan the teachers' incapacity to put reforms into effect, yet do little to address the problem. Two of the major obstacles to the implementation of educational policies, the literature suggests, are the poor quality of the pre-service training that teachers receive and the lack of attention given to in-service training. Most reforms can be put into practice only if teachers understand them, sympathize with them, and have mastered the requisite skills. But seldom do African administrators take the appropriate steps. Even wider ranging reforms designed to transform both the curriculum and teaching practices, such as ESR in Tanzania and the "Entebbe Mathematics" project in East Africa are accompanied by few if any provisions for in-service training.¹⁵³ And the training that is offered, whether pre-service or in-service, is often inappropriate and conducted by instructors who are themselves poorly trained.¹⁵⁴ If fingers must be pointed, they should be pointed in this instance at the administrators.

In fairness, many accounts of educational administration and educational reform in Africa do not even mention such problems, let alone dwell on them. And there have been cases, in Uganda under Idi Amin for instance, in which educational ministries have demonstrated remarkable competence and ingenuity under extreme duress.¹⁵⁵ There also are indications that the general situation may be improving, with ministries placing more emphasis on results and less on adherence to routine, giving greater discretion to local officials, encouraging teamwork and even input from local communities, and instituting better procedures for monitoring and evaluating the results.¹⁵⁶ While there remains considerable room for improvement in both the effectiveness and the integrity of educational administration, the picture is not entirely bleak.

The Teachers

The administrator's stereotype of the teacher, like most stereotypes, captures a part of the reality. Teacher quality is a major problem in African

¹⁵³Bam 1972; Briggs 1977; Bude 1982; Lillis 1985a, Okorie 1977; Saunders 1982; Sinclair 1977; Tiberondwa 1976

¹⁵⁴Hurst and Rudwell 1986; Johnston 1985; Wallace 1980

¹⁵⁵Heynemann 1983

¹⁵⁶Conyers 1981; Wilks 1985

countries, and so are the low level of commitment and the low morale that characterize the profession. To be sure, it is unfair to place all the blame for these deficiencies on the teachers. Politicians and administrators have been largely responsible, as just suggested, for they have typically resisted offering the incentives and the sustained support and assistance needed to upgrade the teaching corps. Planners can also be criticized, for they have failed to take adequately into account the limitations of those expected to put policies into effect within the school and the classroom. But wherever the blame should go, it is obvious that indiscriminately selected and poorly trained and motivated teachers are not effective agents of reform. Although they may be competent enough if permitted to teach in the ways they know best -- in the ways they have always taught or in the ways they themselves were taught -- they generally lack the flexibility and the self-confidence needed to master and to apply radically innovative techniques or material.¹⁵⁷

Even if teacher quality were not an issue, however, teachers might still represent a major obstacle to the implementation of new policies, and for three general reasons. In the first place, teachers may doubt that putting such policies into practice is worth the effort. The better teachers, those with more confidence in their abilities and in their expertise, may believe, quite correctly, that particular reforms cannot attain the intended goals. They may reject the pedagogical or curricular theory (if any) used to justify the reform, they may believe that the needed resources will never arrive, or they may think the policy, however appealing in the abstract, cannot be made to work with their pupils.¹⁵⁸ In addition, teachers often conclude, again with good reason, that reforms mean more work without additional compensation. In the short run there will be new learning required, commonly without any tangible incentives and no more than minimal in-service instruction. And for the duration the teacher's workload may be increased, for reforms have a tendency to add new responsibilities without removing old ones.¹⁵⁹ If teachers are persuaded that new policies represent a significant improvement over the old, they may be willing to make the sacrifices demanded of them.

¹⁵⁷Adetoro 1966; Bray 1981; Bude 1982; Farine 1969; Gardinier 1974; Kolawole 1980; Lillis 1985a

¹⁵⁸Adams 1983; Brooke 1980; Lillis 1985a

¹⁵⁹Kolawole 1980; Lillis 1985; Sinclair 1977; and, more generally, Fullan and Pomfret 1977,¹⁵⁹

teachers are persuaded that new policies represent a significant improvement over the old, they may be willing to make the sacrifices demanded of them. But they are not easily persuaded even if a serious attempt is made, and usually a serious attempt is not made.

Another set of reasons for frequent resistance to innovation relates to the status concerns of teachers, and particularly of rural teachers. Prior to independence the indigenous African teacher usually enjoyed high status in his community for reasons linked to his ties to the missions and to his mastery of what was generally a scarce and valued resource, literacy in a Western language. Teachers had easy access to the local chiefs and as independence approached they often were sought out to provide political leadership.¹⁶⁰ But since independence, the social status of teachers, both locally and nationally, has typically been in decline. The emergence of opportunities for Africans to advance themselves outside the teaching profession, and particularly in the civil service, has contributed, and so has the gradual erosion of the teacher's former quasi-monopoly of information and expertise within the village.¹⁶¹ These changes help to account for the decline in teacher quality: it has become increasingly difficult to attract talented and ambitious youths into the profession and to retain those teachers who are able. They also help to account for the intense preoccupation of teachers with issues and symbols of social status. This preoccupation has meant in practice that teachers tend almost instinctively to resist certain types of educational reforms that frequently are favored by policy-makers. In some instances teachers have had misgivings about educational expansion, seeing it as a process destined to undermine what status the teacher still enjoys because of his literacy and his familiarity with a larger world.¹⁶² And almost everywhere they have resisted reforms likely to reduce the social distance separating them from peasants or artisans. Thus it is generally safe to assume that teachers will resist any policy that requires them, literally, to dirty their hands, obvious examples being the various attempts to introduce practical, work-related activities into the curriculum or to set aside time

¹⁶⁰Nwagwu 1978; Tiberondwa 1976

¹⁶¹Asiwaju 1971; Thomson 1972; Tiberondwa 1976

¹⁶²Stock 1985

for work on a school farm.¹⁶³ The teacher derives much of his dwindling social status and self-image from his identification with an academic curriculum and from his role in encouraging and perhaps preparing local youths to seek positions in the modern sector. To challenge these associations is to invite resistance and non-compliance.

The final set of reasons that teachers often resist implementing innovations relates in a different way to their positions in their respective communities. Whatever the teacher's own preferences, they often find themselves caught in the middle between a ministry promoting a major reform and a community that does not approve. Since teachers normally live in the community in which they teach, since they are more inclined than the ministry to consider local preferences "rational," and since they may be observed more closely and critically by their communities than by school inspectors or district officers, teachers often side with the local population when such conflicts arise.¹⁶⁴ (On occasion this sort of co-optation by the local community -- a phenomenon that has been labelled "going native" -- can also affect the ministry's district officers and other field agents.)¹⁶⁵ The major exceptions probably occur when the teachers see their personal interests as furthered by the ministry's position rather than the local community's. But such exceptions seem infrequent. Indeed the literature suggests that the local community commonly wants essentially the same kind of school that the teacher wants, a school oriented to preparing for standardized examinations, and through them, for escape from the village.¹⁶⁶ That reforming policy makers and ministries share this commitment is less certain.

Client Population

Philip Foster has argued that "no type of educational planning will succeed unless it is based upon the aspirations and expectations of the majority of the population or provides incentive structures that will allow these

¹⁶³Lillis and Hogan 1983; Marchand 1974; Ndongko 1980; Saunders and Vuilliamy 1983; Sinclair 1977

¹⁶⁴Bude 1982; Maravanyika 1986; Moock 1973; Oyeneye 1980; Sinclair 1977; Sjostrom and Sjostrom 1983; Uwakah 1981

¹⁶⁵see Muthaba 1974 and, more generally, Montgomery 1979

¹⁶⁶Lillis and Hogan 1983; Oyeneye 1980; Saunders and Vuilliamy 1983; Urch 1969

aspirations to be modified to accord with national goals."¹⁶⁷ The literature may contain no stronger statement of the potential impact of the client population on the implementation of education policies. But is the statement too strong? The studies reviewed do not justify offering a general answer, but they do comment on several relevant issues. These can best be considered from two opposing perspectives, that of client populations confronted by policies that are unwelcome, and that of administrators and others charged with implementing such policies.

It was noted above that the implementation stage in the policy process is frequently marked by the continuation of earlier struggles over the content of a policy. With respect to educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa, it would be more appropriate to say that the politics of policy-making often does not really begin until the implementation stage. Usually denied input when policies are formulated, client populations compensate by concentrating their energies on transforming policies while efforts are being made to put them into effect.¹⁶⁸ Some of the ways in which this might be done have been discussed already. Thus local communities can put pressure on politicians or, less commonly, on ministries that can result in modifications. And, as just suggested, they may join forces with co-opted teachers or district officials in a common campaign to neutralize a distasteful policy.

As for the potential success of such tactics, the literature seems to support two sets of observations. First, activity by the client populations is less likely to prevent the implementation of a policy than it is to transform the policy that is implemented. The pattern has perhaps best been summarized by Joel Samoff in a study of educational reform efforts in Tanzania:

It is important to note here that most often, where educational reform efforts have not reached their stated goals, they have more often been diverted than blocked. That is, in a situation where a progressive leadership for the most part controls the terms of political discourse, and where there is little outspoken opposition to major policy directives,

¹⁶⁷Foster 1975, p. 375

¹⁶⁸Kay 1987; Samoff 1979; Samoff 1983; and, more generally, Grindle 1981

resistance to change takes the form of deflection. New policies are converted into mechanisms to maintain older ways.¹⁶⁹

The second set of observations concerns the specific sources of local opposition to a policy. The literature (and common sense) suggests that different kinds of policy are vulnerable to different kinds of opposition. Some educational policies -- those concerning the number and location of schools perhaps, or procedures for school finance -- can only be derailed by organized resistance, and perhaps only by organized resistance that has the backing of local elites or institutions of self-government. Alternatively, if such policies gain the support of the local chief, for instance, or a local school board, resistance can be futile.¹⁷⁰ But there are other policies that cannot withstand disorganized resistance, providing it is widespread. In this category may belong most curricular and pedagogical reforms. Thus the so-called vocational school fallacy refers to the limited ability of policy-makers to implement certain kinds of curricular changes in the face of unorganized but massive resistance from students and their parents. Similarly, attempts to introduce "progressive" pedagogical practices in African schools often founder when confronted with students who are neither inquisitive nor assertive, and who are frequently malnourished to boot.¹⁷¹ And at the limit, parents in much of Sub-Saharan Africa can still resort to what may be the most effective weapon when presented with unacceptable educational policies: they can keep their children out of school.¹⁷²

What are the implications for policy-makers and for approaches to implementation? Many have concluded that the only solution is some form of decentralization, either a radical form in which local communities would make their own choices or a modified form in which policy-makers would adapt their programs to local circumstances and preferences.¹⁷³ But such approaches may be less suitable for education than for other sectors. It must be remembered that education is highly valued in African communities largely because it is seen as a means of escape from inherited social positions and from the

¹⁶⁹Samoff 1983, p. 63

¹⁷⁰Adams and Chen 1982; Adesina 1972; Bray 1981; Brooke 1980; Lungu 1985; Mutahaba 1974; Simmons 1979; Stock 1985; Urwick 1983

¹⁷¹Brooke 1980; Swetz 1975

¹⁷²Mutahaba 1974; Stock 1985

¹⁷³Erny 1974; Foster 1975; Goldstone 1979

countryside. Any attempt to adapt schooling to the environment of a given community, or to give the community control in the assumption that it would pursue the same goal, might well arouse what has been termed "the acute sensitivity of rural communities to policies which diminish their children's hopes of upward social mobility."¹⁷⁴

But such observations do not constitute an argument for the status quo. The preceding pages have indicated several areas in which there is abundant room for improvement in implementation strategies. And always in the background is the matter of policy design. To repeat an admonition offered earlier, we must not let our concern with problems of implementation take our attention away from what is still the most fundamental issue; designing policies that can be implemented -- and that should be implemented.

Assigning Weights

To accept all of the arguments just summarized is to indulge in over explanation. It would be impossible, either in general or in any specific case, for each of the sets of factors considered above to be as important a determinant of implementation problems as its particular advocates suggest. But how much explanatory weight should we assign to each set? Of all the studies of educational policies in Africa reviewed for this report, only one addresses this issue explicitly. The study in question is Sinclair's review of the numerous attempts in African and other developing countries to introduce work-experience programs into formal schooling.¹⁷⁵ In an assessment of the overall pattern the author asserts that the outcomes of these projects generally fall far short of the objectives and attributes this poor record "in about equal proportions to (i) weakness of strategy, (ii) lack of teacher skills and motivation, (iii) lack of material resources, and (iv) negative responses from clients."¹⁷⁶ Whether the pattern for the African projects was similar to the pattern overall is not discussed.

¹⁷⁴Sinclair 1977, p. 374

¹⁷⁵1977

¹⁷⁶p. 363

But if the authors of the remaining studies fail to address this important issue, one can still draw some tentative conclusions from their distribution of emphasis. Using a system of assigning points to the set or sets of factors highlighted in each relevant study, it appears that three of the six sets of factors discussed above are together responsible for the great majority of the implementation difficulties examined: the policy message (28.5 percent of the points distributed), political factors (27 percent), and bureaucratic and administrative factors (20.9 percent). The literature as a whole -- as distinct, of course, from individual studies -- puts much less emphasis on issues relating to teachers (12 percent), the client populations (7.2 percent), and resource constraints (4.4 percent). To be sure, it would be risky in the extreme to consider this impressionistic distribution of emphasis even a rough guide to the weights that should actually be assigned to the factors in question. But summarizing the literature in this way may at least suggest the need to address the matter of causation in a systematic and methodologically sound manner. The literature on educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa has hardly begun to satisfy this need.

CONCLUSION

It is common to conclude reviews of the literature on a subject with calls for additional research. In this case there is more reason than usual to adhere to convention. As noted above, our knowledge of issues bearing on the implementation of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa remains seriously deficient. Although many scholars have commented on such issues in passing, the subject has yet to receive the sustained and careful attention that it merits.

But this said, how should researchers proceed? An obvious place to turn for inspiration, and perhaps also for models and hypotheses, is to the more developed literature on the implementation of educational and other policies in the industrialized countries of the West. A few examples should suffice to suggest the possible rewards.

The most ambitious study of educational policy implementation yet conducted, Berman and McLaughlin's analysis of 100 "Title III" projects in the United States, reached a number of conclusions that may be generalizable to other contexts, including African contexts. The authors found, for instance, that the success of a project was not significantly related either to the level of federal funding involved or to the substance of a project -- to the educational methods or techniques to be introduced. They also found that ambitious projects were, if anything, more successful than limited or narrowly defined ones, and induced significantly more change in the behavior of teachers. Important to the success of all projects were the clarity of the goals, the quality (more than the quantity) of in-service training, the strength and stability of the project leadership, and teacher participation in project decisions. Teachers' experience was negatively associated with implementation, and teacher quality (as measured by verbal ability) had little effect, while teachers' sense of efficacy had strong positive effects. In general implementation problems were more serious and more difficult to overcome at the secondary than at the primary level.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷Berman and McLaughlin 1977

A broadly similar study conducted about the same time in Western Australia supports most but not all of the conclusions reached by Berman and McLaughlin. This study differs on the question of resources. It found that the more expensive projects were more likely to be implemented easily and completely. But it also found, as with the study of the "Title III" projects, that the actual characteristics of an innovation were not highly related to implementation, that the clarity of objectives and teacher's involvement and sense of competence contributed positively, that teacher experience (or age) contributed negatively, and that implementation problems were greater in secondary than in primary schools.¹⁷⁸ Both studies emphasize the importance of factors at the school level, suggesting that the highest priority for governments seeking educational reform is to develop a capacity for change at this level.

Several additional studies reviewed by Fullan and Pomfret in 1977 generally concur except on the matter of the substance of innovations, where they suggest that substance is important. More specifically, reforms that entail new teaching strategies and altered role relationships in the classroom seem to be more difficult to implement than those that promote changes in organization, administrative procedures, or in the use of materials. As for the policy implications, Fullan and Pomfret put particular emphasis on the need for time and on the importance of in-service training and other forms of personal interaction and support:

Research has shown time and again that there is no substitute for the primacy of personal contact among implementers, and between implementers and planners/consultants, if the difficult process of unlearning old roles and learning new ones is to occur. Equally clear is the absence of such opportunities on a regular basis during the planning and implementation of most innovations.¹⁷⁹

Moving further afield, a recent study of innovations in service agencies such as hospitals and professional societies has reached potentially generalizable conclusions concerning the effectiveness of different tactical approaches to implementation. The most successful tactic (it worked in all 19 of the examined cases in which it was tried) was the one labeled intervention,

¹⁷⁸Porter 1980

¹⁷⁹p. 391

an approach that stresses the use of rationales and incentives to foster change and the provision of the models and assistance needed to demonstrate the feasibility of change. The least successful tactic (it worked in 10 of 23 cases) was the one labeled implementation by edict, an approach in which sponsors restricted themselves to issuing directives requiring adoption. Between these extremes were implementation by persuasion, in which features of innovations and of their introduction are determined by those affected (successful in 14 of 17 cases). No relationship was found between the tactics employed and either the type of change sought or the level of time pressure. Finally, different tactics had different costs. Implementation by persuasion and by participation both required strong staff support and high process budgets while the most successful tactic, intervention, had relatively modest resource demands.¹⁸⁰ However generalizable the specific conclusions of this study, it is useful to be reminded that there may be more than one way to implement a policy and that there may be a trade-off between the effectiveness of a particular strategy and the cost of that strategy.

Such studies -- and many others could be cited -- suggest a rich agenda for additional research on the implementation of educational policies in Africa. Additional research is certainly needed. The African countries are less able than most to tolerate the inefficiencies implicit in failures to implement policies, and they probably stand to gain more if appropriate reforms are in fact implemented more-or-less as intended. For these reasons the familiar argument that good research can be justified by its implications for policy holds in this case with particular force. Policy implementation is too important and too problematic an issue to be approached on the basis of the literature on African educational policies as it now stands -- on the basis of a literature that, for all its descriptive richness, still consists essentially of theoretically and methodologically uninformed case studies.

¹⁸⁰Nutt 1986

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Journals and Serials Examined

Following is a list in alphabetical order of the journals and serials examined systematically in order to locate articles bearing on the theme of this paper. Following each title is the abbreviation used, if any, when citing a particular journal or serial in the bibliography (Appendix B) and dates indicating the period for which the journal and serial was examined. Publications that have changed their names during the period surveyed are identified, and the names of the predecessors or successors are given.

- Acta Sociologica (AS) 1968-85
- Administration and Society (AdS) 1974-86 (to 1974: Journal of Comparative Administration)
- Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ) 1960-85
- Africa 1960-85
- African Development (AfD) 1976-79
- African Affairs (AfA) 1967-79
- African Economic History (AEH) 1976-84
- African Perspectives (AfP) 1976-79
- The African Review (AfR) 1971-83
- African Rural Employment Survey (ARES) 1972-75
- African Studies Bulletin (AfSB) 1958-69 (from 1970: African Studies Bulletin)
- African Studies Review (AfSR) 1970-85
- Afrika Spectrum (AfS) 1966-85
- L'Afrique et l'Asie (AfAs) 1960-72 (from 1974: L'Afrique et l'Asie Modernes)
- L'Afrique et l'Asie Modernes (AfAsM) 1974-86 (to 1972: L'Afrique et l'Asie)
- Alternatives 1975-86
- American Anthropologist (AA) 1968-86
- American Educational Research Journal (AERJ) 1964-86
- American Journal of Education (AJE) 1979-86 (to 1979: School Review)
- American Journal of Political Science (AJPS) 1973-85
- American Journal of Sociology (AJS) 1964-86
- American Political Science Review (APSR) 1960-85
- American Sociological Review (ASR) 1970-86
- Anthropology and Education Quarterly (AEQ) 1978-85
- Asian and African Studies (AsAfS) 1965-85
- British Journal of Educational Studies (BJES) 1970-86
- British Journal of Political Science (BJPS) 1971-86
- British Journal of Sociology (BJS) 1960-85
- British Journal of Sociology of Education (BJSE) 1980-86
- Bulletin de l'Institut fondamental d'Afrique noire, Serie B: Sciences humaines (BIFAN) 1966-81
- Bulletin of Latin American Research (BLAR) 1982-85
- Bulletin of Ghana Geographical Association (BGGA) 1960-75
- Cahiers africains d'administration publique (CAAO.P) 1967-75
- Cahiers d'etudes africains (CEA) 1960-84

Cahiers économiques et sociaux (CECs) 1962-82
Canadian Journal of African Studies (CJAS) 1967-85
Civilisations 1960-80
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Cultures et développement (CD) 1969-84
Current Anthropology (CA) 1970-86
The Developing Ecoonomies (DE) 1963-86
Development and Change (DC) 1969-86
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The East Africa Geographical Review (EAGR) 1963-74
East African Economic Review (EAER) 1964-68 (from 1969: East Africa
Economic Review)
Eastern Africa Journal of Rural Development (EAJRD) 1968-81
Economic Development and Cultural Change (EDCC) 1960-86
Education in Eastern Africa (EEaf) 1970-77
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis (EEPA) 1979-86
Ethnology 1962-86
Etudes d'Histoire africaine (EHaf) 1970-78
Evaluation Quarterly (EvQ) 1977-79 (from 1980: Evaluation Review)
Evaluation Review (EvR) 1980-86 (to 1979: Evaluation Quarterly)
Geneve-African (G-A) 1962-85
Government and Opposition (GO) 1965-86
Harvard Educational Review (HER) 1960-86
Higher Education (HE) 1972-85
Histoire sociale / Social History (HS) 1979-84
History of Education Quarterly (HEQ) 1961-86
Human Organization (HO) 1963-86
Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex): Bulletin
(IDSB) 1969-86
Interchange 1970-86
International Journal of African Historical Studies (IJAHS) 1968-86
International Journal of Comparative Sociology (IJCS) 1964-85
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International Labour Review (ILR) 1960-85
International Migration Review (IMR) 1980-85
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Journal of African History (JafH) 1960-86
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Administration and Society)
Journal of Contemporary African Studies 1983
Journal of Developing Areas (JDA) 1966-86
Journal of Developing Economies (JDE) 1974-85
Journal of Development Studies (JDS) 1964-86
Journal of Human Resources (JHR) 1966-86
Journal of Local Administration Overseas (JLAO) 1962-66
(to 1961: Journal of African Administration; from 1966; Journal
of Administration Overseas)
Journal of Modern African Studies (JMAS) 1963-85
Journal of Policy Analysis and Management (JPAM) 1981-85
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Journal of the Geographical Association of Tanzania (JGAT) 1969-84
Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN) 1960-77
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The Uganda Journal (UJ) 1961-73
University of Ghana Institute of African Studies: Research Review
(GRR) 1966-72
West African Journal of Education (WAJE) 1965-80
World Development (WD) 1973-86
World Politics (WP) 1962-86
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Articles

The following lists all potentially relevant articles identified through the examination of the journals and serials listed in Appendix A, as well as additional articles and monographs that make more than trivial contribution to the understanding of the implementation of educational policies in sub-Saharan Africa.

- + Publications that deal directly with issues of implementation of educational policies in sub-Saharan Africa are identified with a plus sign.
- ^ Publications that deal with issues of implementation but not specifically with Africa, or with the African context but not with policy implementation, are identified with a circumflex.
- * Publications in either category that are, in the author's judgement, particularly useful for present purposes are identified with an asterisk.

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